

Arts

LIB

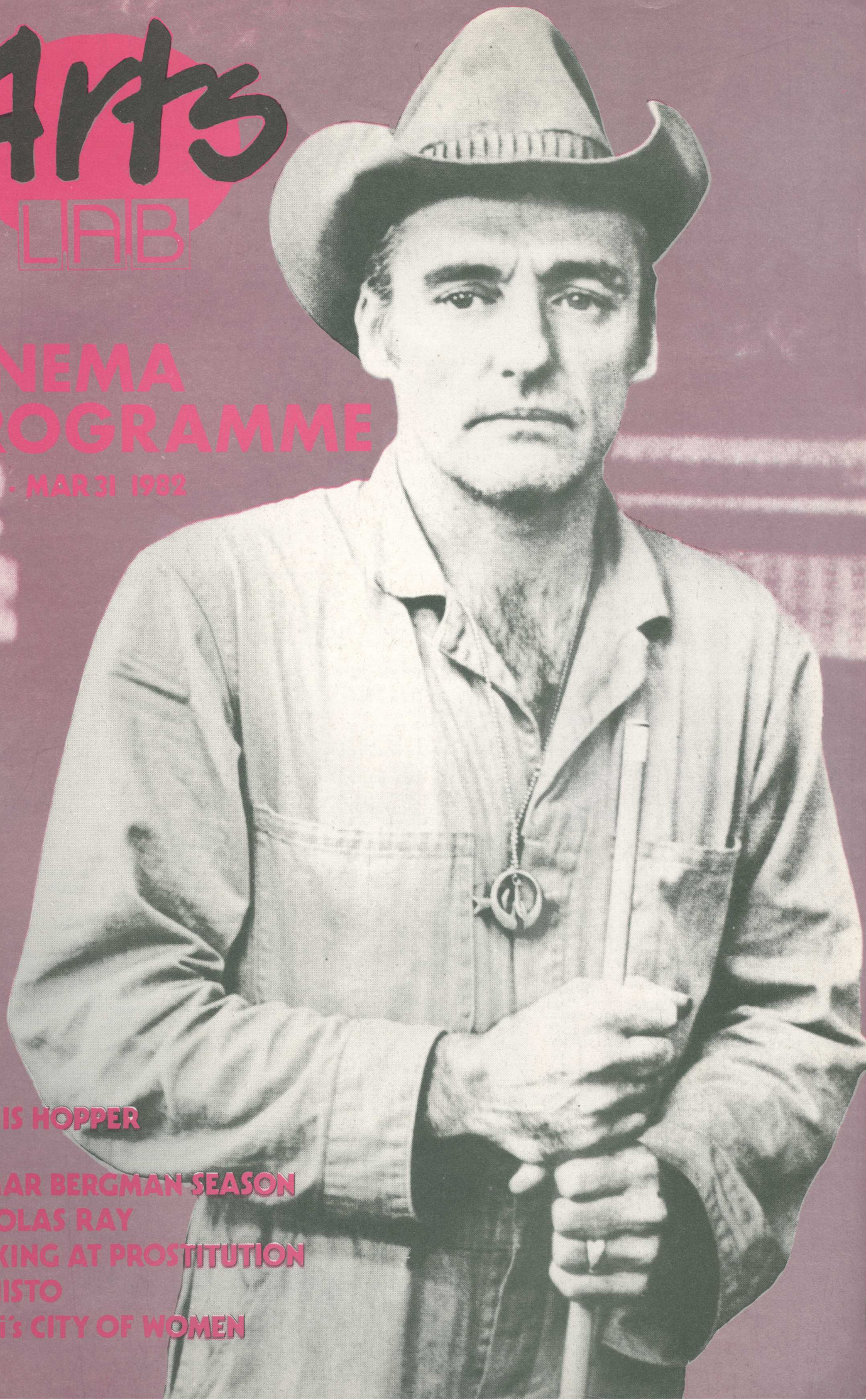
CINEMA PROGRAMME

JAN 6 - MAR 31 1982

60p

DENNIS HOPPER

INGMAR BERGMAN SEASON
NICHOLAS RAY
LOOKING AT PROSTITUTION
MEPHISTO
Fellini's CITY OF WOMEN



INDEX

AMERICAN DREAMER, THE	33
AMERICAN FRIEND, THE	35
APOCALYPSE NOW	36
ARTISTS AT THE TOP OF THE BIG TOP:	
DISORIENTATED	20
BAD TIMING	40
Bergman, Ingmar (introduction)	5
BIGGER THAN LIFE	16
BITTER VICTORY	17
Black Film-makers	39
Book Reviews	42
BROTHERS AND SISTERS	31
Byrne, Brian (introduction)	38
Calendar	22, 23
CAMILLE	29
CITIZENS BAND	31
CITY OF WOMEN	37
COALFACE	38, 39
COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER	40
CONSTANT FACTOR, THE	27
DAYS OF HEAVEN	41
DEVIL'S EYE, THE	10
DIARY FOR TIMOTHY, A	38, 39
DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID, THE	25
DISCREET CHARM OF THE	
BOURGEOISIE, THE	26
DUELLISTS, THE	41
EAGLE'S WING	41
EAST OF EDEN	41
EASY RIDER	33
ESTUARY	38, 39
FACE, THE	10
Film Workshop News	38, 39
FRENZY	6
FROM THE LIFE OF THE	
MARIONETTES	12
GERMANY IN AUTUMN	21
HONEYSUCKLE ROSE	13
Hopper, Dennis (introduction)	32
IN A LONELY PLACE	15
INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN	38, 39
JAMES BROTHERS, THE	16
JERICHO MILE, THE	3
JOURNEY INTO AUTUMN	8
KID BLUE	34
KILLER OF SHEEP	39
KING OF KINGS	18
Kluge, Alexander (introduction/ filmography)	19
KLUTE	29
LAST MOVIE, THE	34
LAUNCH	38, 39
LESSON IN LOVE, A	8
LIGHTNING OVER WATER	18
LONG GOOD FRIDAY, THE	40
Looking at Prostitution (introduction)	28
LUSTY MEN, THE	16
MAD DOG (MAD DOG MORGAN)	34
MEPHISTO	37
MILKY WAY, THE	26
MISTER SKIPPER	38, 39
MORT EN CE JARDIN, LA	25
NASHVILLE	40
NEW EARTH	38, 39
92 IN THE SHADE	3
NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET	38, 39
OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE	20
ON DANGEROUS GROUND	15
1 + 1 = 3	26
OUT OF THE BLUE	36
Overlooked or Underrated	3, 4
PARTY GIRL	17
PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB, A	30
PATRIOT, THE	24
PHANTOM OF LIBERTY, THE	26
PORT OF CALL	6
POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE, THE	4
PRETTY BABY	30
PROSTITUTE	30
RAILWAY	38, 39
Ray, Nicholas (introduction)	14
REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE	16, 33
REVOLT OF MAMIE STOVER, THE	29

RIVERWORK	38, 39
SAVAGE INNOCENTS, THE	18
SAWDUST AND TINSEL	7
SILENCE, THE	12
SEVENTH SEAL, THE	9
SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT	9
STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE	4
STRONG-MAN FERDINAND	21
STUNT MAN, THE	41
SUMMER INTERLUDE	7
SUMMER WITH MONIKA	8
TAKING A PART	30
THEY LIVE BY NIGHT	15
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY	11
TRACKS	35
UNFAITHFULLY YOURS	3
VIRGIN SPRING, THE	10
WAITING WOMEN	6
WILD STRAWBERRIES	9
WIND ACROSS THE EVERGLADES	17
WINTER LIGHT	11
WIVES	27
YESTERDAY GIRL	19

Cover still: Dennis Hopper in 'The American Friend'

CREDITS

Printed by the Arts Lab Press.
Designed by Teoman Irmaki
Typeset by the Administrative Typing Service
Department of the University of Aston and the
Aston Sun.
Edited by Peter Walsh and Marion Doyen.

ARTS LAB CINEMA STAFF

Director: Peter Walsh.
Programmer: Marion Doyen.
Assistant: David Hutchison.
Chief Projectionist: Gerry Gradwell.
Librarian: Neil Gammie.
Birmingham Film Workshop: Roger Shannon (Co-ordinator).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our grateful thanks to the following organisations and individuals: Amber Films, Artificial Eye Film Company, Martyn Auty, Barber International Films, Birmingham Film Workshop, Blue Dolphin Film Distributors, British Film Institute (Jane Clarke/Distribution Division/David Meeker/Barry Edson/Film and Video Library/National Film Archive), Alan Brookfield, Brian Byrne, Cinegade Film Distribution, Cinema International Corporation (U.K.), Columbia-E.M.I.-Warner Film Distributors, Richard Combs, Contemporary Films, Marion Dain, Darville Associates, Geothe Institute, German Film Library, Gold Key Enterprises (U.S.A.), Hand Made Films, Harris/Films, I.T.C. Film Distributors, Sheila Johnston, Alan Lovell, Mainline Pictures, Michael McLean, Osiris Films, Victor Perkins, P.R.O.S., Rank Film Distributors, Neil Sinyard, Philip Strick, Paul Taylor, The Other Cinema.

The Arts Lab acknowledges financial assistance from the British Film Institute, West Midlands Arts and West Midlands County Council.

DENNIS HOPPER

This programme features a season of films directed by and/or featuring Dennis Hopper. We are hoping to complement these screenings by arranging an exhibition of Hopper's extensive photographic work and possibly a visit to Birmingham by the man himself. Arrangements have not been confirmed at the time of going to press, so please look out for further details about this event.

CINEMA PRICES

£1.60 (public)
£1.30 (members and claimants)
£1.10 (life members)
85p (children under 14)
50p (OAPs)

There are reductions for students on all matinee and late night performances.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership costs £7.50 and is open to all persons over the age of 18 years. The Arts Lab and the Centre for the Arts are now operating a joint membership system which means that subscribers will enjoy the benefits of membership (regular mailings and reduced admission prices, etc.) of both organisations. This new system also introduces a special membership fee of £5 for students and unemployed people.

TECHNICAL POINTS

Although the Lab Cinema is very well equipped and always endeavours to obtain good prints, it sometimes happens that the only available copy of a film is in very poor condition. This problem is exasperated by the fact that cinema attendances continue to decline and distributors are therefore more reluctant than ever to provide an adequate number of prints of new films or to replace copies of older titles. And because we structure our programmes in terms of seasons, we are likely to opt for screening a poor print rather than not show the film at all. These conflicting ambitions—a policy of showing good prints and a wide variety of films—means that the quality of our presentation is likely to vary widely. In this programme, for example, we are showing a selection of films by Nicholas Ray, many of which are only available in 16 mm. The credits in the programme indicate when a film is being shown in 16 mm., and usually this means that the print is likely to be of sub-standard quality.

THE COFFEE BAR

The Arts Lab Coffee Bar is open at lunchtimes and in the early evening, offering anything from a full meal to a light snack. The Coffee Bar also caters for parties and special bookings—contact Debbie Raikes on 021-359 4192.

CINEMA FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Screening of films at reduced prices for the unemployed will continue on a regular basis every Tuesday at 2.30 p.m. The admission price is 50 pence, on production of dole cards. Please see the calendar at the centre of this programme for details of titles, or ring Marion Doyen on 021-359 2403/4192.

THE BOOKSTALL

The Bookstall continues to expand its range of books on cinema and media studies and free 'new acquisitions' lists are available on request. We are stocking the Lindsay Anderson book on John Ford and the re-issued *Howard Hawks* by Robin Wood, both of which are reviewed elsewhere in this programme. Opening hours are now from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m., and from 5.30 p.m. until the start of the last cinema performance. We also run a mail-order service; please write to Neil Gammie for a full catalogue of our current holdings.

OVERLOOKED OR UNDERRATED



UNFAITHFULLY YOURS

(January 6)

Director: Preston Sturges.
U.S.A., 1948.
Script: Preston Sturges.
Photography: Victor Milner.
Music: Alfred Newman.
Leading Players: Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, Rudy Vallee, Barbara Lawrence.
Black and white. Certificate A. 96 minutes.

The jury is still out on UNFAITHFULLY YOURS. It used to be regarded as an inventive but imperfect piece, one stage of the slippery decline that befell Preston Sturges after his golden period of comic creativity between 1940 and 1944. But Pauline Kael regards it as "one of the best comedies ever made in America . . . writers and directors have been stealing from it for years"; and the film has been the subject of a vigorous re-appraisal by E. Rubinstein in a recent issue of *Sight and Sound*.

An orchestral conductor (Rex Harrison) suspects his wife of infidelity. During his performances of Rossini, Wagner and Tchaikovsky, he hits upon an alternately violent, noble and melodramatic way of dealing with the situation. The humour of the film is then directed towards exploring the contrast between what happens in his mind's-eye and what happens in reality.

Although the flights of fantasy are characteristic extensions of Sturges' fascination with memory and imagination, the film is in many ways something of a departure for him. It does not have the satirical thrust against the American Dream and the ironies of so-called 'success' that animated his great Paramount comedies. It indulges a farcical strain in Sturges which is perhaps less secure than his satire and less endearing than his sentiment. Nevertheless, Andrew Sarris's characterisation of him as the "Brueghel of American comedy directors" is confirmed here by the rich gallery of supporting characters, notably Edgar Kennedy's private detective who soothes the conductor's rage at his spying on his wife with deftly turned compliments like: "Nobody handles Handel like you handle Handel! And your Delius! Delirious!" The acid precision of Rex Harrison's leading performance, particularly the ferocity he gives to his fits of jealousy, makes it arguably the best piece of screen acting of his career.

The two Sturges qualities particularly to the fore in this film are his waspishness and the complex nature of his intellect. Nobody handles marital quarrels as Sturges handles marital quarrels, and the disturbing intensity of the conductor's state of mind, where jealousy gives way to plans of murder, takes the film in the direction of the tortured misogyny of *film noir*. Although mainly comedies, Sturges' films often move between extremes of elation and despair, and the probing of the pain and humiliation of sexual jealousy in UNFAITHFULLY YOURS might have discomforted contemporary audiences in the same way as two other formidable Hollywood black comedies of the period, Chaplin's MONSIEUR VERDOUX and Wilder's A FOREIGN AFFAIR.

Perhaps some of the humour also went a little over the audience's head. Sturges clearly intended the film on one level as a satire on fulsome Forties' movies about musicians (from RHAPSODY IN BLUE to A SONG TO REMEMBER), and it might be that modern film audiences are more alert to the conventions of generic parody than the spectators of Sturges' time. It seems also that he wanted the character of the conductor to be in part a zesty parody of Sir Thomas Beecham, and some of the humour is lost if this reference is not received. Beecham might not have had this character's capacity for jealousy (Sir Thomas's disdainful opinion of women was amply conveyed by his observation that "I've never met one whom I thought was worth losing a night's sleep over"). But they do share the same flamboyance, the same cruel wit, and Sturges does make a point of drawing a parallel between his conductor's background and that of Beecham ("My family's product has kept England on time since Waterloo").

The use of music in the film is ingenious and somewhat ambiguous. Sturges relishes the irreverent visual associations that accompany some of the masterpieces of so-called 'high culture'. (The same piece of Wagner was used for similar comic purposes by Sturges during the honeymoon scene of THE LADY EVE.) At the same time, you have to know these pieces of 'high culture' in order to appreciate Sturges' irreverence, and his cultural disparagement seems inseparably linked to his cultural sophistication. This ambivalence recalls the arguments about the merits of 'popular entertainment' as against those of 'aesthetic realism' that fuelled his darkest and arguably greatest film, SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS. Woody Allen pays explicit homage to this dual aspect of Sturges in STARDUST MEMORIES, but whereas Allen gives the impression of a clown

hankering after the profundities of 'art', Sturges often gives the impression of the cultured connoisseur seeking the simple energetic directness of the cartoon. UNFAITHFULLY YOURS lurches between high intellect and broad farce, and the resulting brew is rich and strange, aggressively witty and polished. As Sturges' comedies even now seem to be insufficiently known, one can go with the expectation of a genuine—possibly even major—discovery.

Neil Sinyard

92 IN THE SHADE

(January 13)

Director: Thomas McGuane.
U.S.A., 1975.
Script: Thomas McGuane. Based on his novel *Ninety-Two in the Shade*.
Photography: Michael C. Butler.
Music: Michael J. Lewis.
Leading Players: Peter Fonda (*Tom Skelton*), Warren Oates (*Nichol Dance*), Margot Kidder (*Miranda*), Burgess Meredith (*Goldsboro Skeleton*), Harry Dean Stanton (*Faron Carter*), Sylvia Miles (*Bella Knowles*), Elizabeth Ashley (*Jeannie Carter*).
Eastman Colour. Certificate (not yet issued). 88 minutes.

Thomas McGuane was given the opportunity of directing this adaptation of his own novel after such well-established directors as Robert Altman, Arthur Penn and Sam Peckinpah had moved in and out of the project. That in itself is testimony to the strangely inclusive, vividly emblematic Americanness of McGuane's original, and one can well imagine its tersely lunatic fable of honour claims among Florida fishing guides serving as an existential comedy and national myth in either the Altman (McCABE AND MRS. MILLER) or Peckinpah (THE BALLAD OF CABLE HOGUE) mode. Penn, of course, was already about to dabble in the McGuane view of things with THE MISSOURI BREAKS, and one might take that film's reference to Tristram Shandy as an indication of the McGuane spirit and of how to construct a narrative—i.e., through collision rather than cohesion.

The problem with rendering McGuane on film is that his manner of address, particularly his humour, is rather more important than the dramatic conflict as such. Old hand Nichol Dance (Warren Oates) plays a practical joke on novice fishing guide and general dilettante Tom Skelton (Peter Fonda), and when the latter retaliates by blowing up Dance's skiff, Dance vows that if Skelton ever ventures to guide again, he will shoot him. The novel is a preparation for that inevitable showdown which takes place in a few bare lines, but it is also a demonstration of how Skelton has spent his life strenuously not preparing himself for anything. He elects, in the end, to take on Dance not so much out of a sense of honour or existential choice, but because he doesn't care to avoid him.

It is a philosophy which McGuane mysteriously relates to the demands of the 'republic', and delightfully illustrates through a portrait of Skelton's whole family, an evidently wayward species of Key West fauna. Much of this antic quality he has managed to preserve on film—mainly through language, the dialogue scrupulously following the literary torsions of the novel. There is even an added element of playfulness in the casting, and in the fact that McGuane shot two endings—one in which Dance carries out his threat, and one in which he and Skelton resolve their differences in liberating laughter. The film has been shown with both endings in the States — on this occasion, in the McGuane spirit, audiences should come prepared (or not) for either.

Richard Combs

Supporting film: THE JERICHO MILE. Dir.: Michael Mann. U.S.A., 1979. With: Peter Strauss, Richard Lawson, Roger E. Mosley. Colour. Certificate AA. 97 minutes.

STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE

(January 27, 29, 30)

Director: Robert Wise.
U.S.A., 1979.

Script: Harold Livingstone, from a story by Alan Dean Foster. Based on the TV series *Star Trek*, created by Gene Roddenberry.

Photography: Richard H Kline, Richard Yuricich; (matt paintings) Matthew Yuricich.

Music: Jerry Goldsmith.

Leading Players: William Shatner (Admiral James T. Kirk), Leonard Nimoy (Mr. Spock), DeForest Kelley (Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy), James Doohan (Engineering Officer Montgomery "Scotty" Scott), George Takei (Helmsman Sulu).
Metrocolor/Scope. Certificate U. 132 minutes.

There are those who can tell you the plot of every single *Star Trek* episode ever transmitted, along with full credits and summary of special points of interest like the first time Kirk got killed or Spock showed signs of emotion. There are those who in their thousands visit special *Star Trek* Conventions masquerading as members of the *Enterprise* or of one of the innumerable alien races encountered during its journeys, and watch tapes not only of complete episodes but also even of the bits that for various reasons were rejected in the first place. It was as a result of the clamour made by these enthusiasts for many years after the series had gracefully concluded rather than decline any further into sterility that the Motion Picture was constructed with considerable agony, suspense, and expenditure. For them, Nimoy was seduced

into replacing his pointed ears, with much-publicised reluctance. For them, the near-legendary Gene Roddenberry was entrusted with the task of outshining *STAR WARS*. And for them, or most of them, it appears that the result was a complete, contemptible flop.

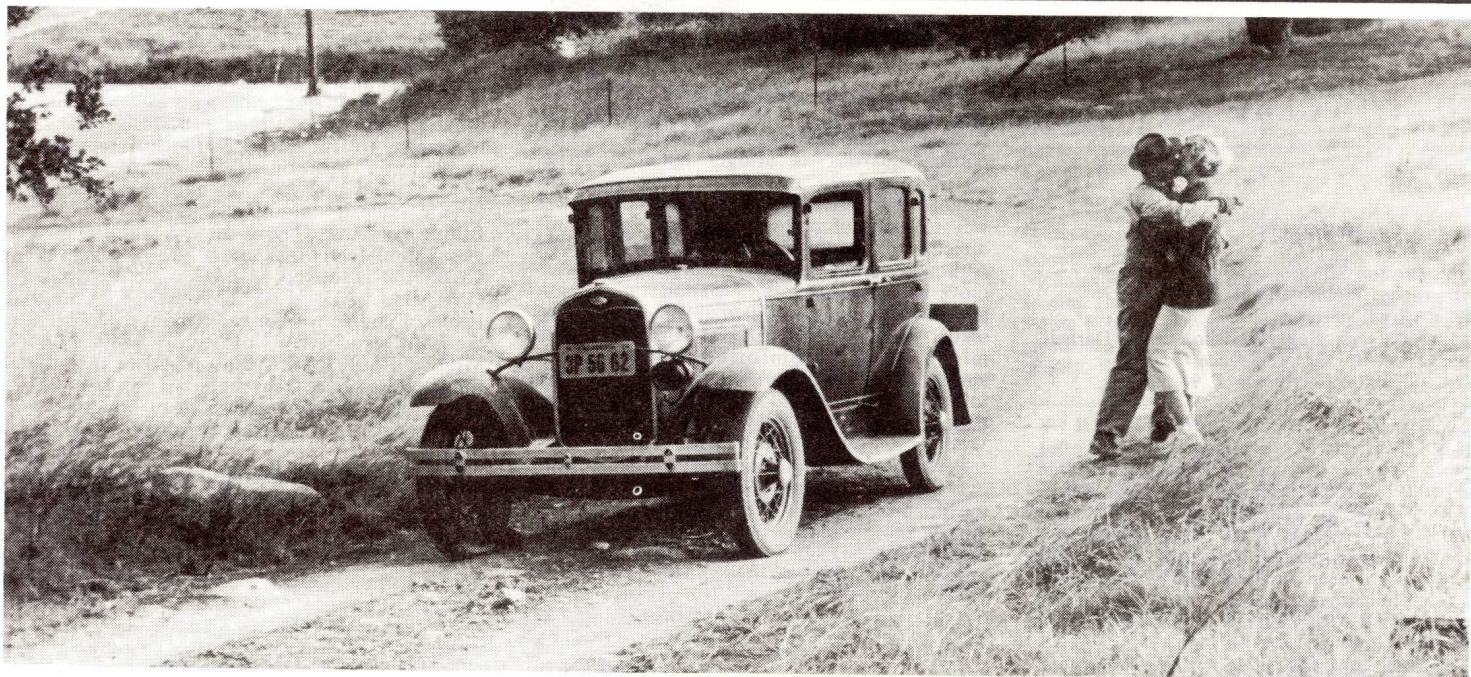
I suspect that to enjoy the Motion Picture one has to be neither a *Star Trek* fan nor a conscientious objector to television fantasy. From neutral ground it's easier to recognise at least two special attractions offered by the film: firstly, that it was made by Robert Wise (whose s-f credentials respectfully include *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* and *THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN*), and secondly, that it ventures into the same territory as '2001' and *SOLARIS* (in, précis, the alien as reflection of self) with a courageous and admirable sensuality. The fans have rejected it as a patch-up job, a pale copy of a well-worn *Star Trek* theme, while the anti-fans have ignored it. There seems a very real danger that this remarkable production will be consigned to a reputation of insipid mediocrity if audiences other than video buyers (who might as easily appreciate its visual splendour as one might assess a country's geography from its postage stamps) have no chance of returning for some second thoughts.

The standard pattern of the series, which became at the same time its weakness and its strength, revolved around the alien threat, the analysis and challenge of that threat, and a resolution involving usually an element of sacrifice. In the Motion Picture, a huge malignant force within a cloud-like formation is on course for Earth, destroying all who try to investigate, and the starship *Enterprise* with her former captain (now Admiral) Kirk are dusted off to save their planet in 24 hours. If this had been a *Battlestar Galactica* episode, of course, a brisk bombing and some spatial dog-fights would have

settled the matter, but Kirk's method is very different. Throughout the film, his actions are based on love, and their success is its consummation. *Star Trek* being what it is, Kirk himself is unable to complete the personal odyssey which quite plainly is the substance of the whole adventure; his substitute, Decker (who unfortunately has nothing like the same charisma) has to be introduced in order to combine with the invader in spectacular miscegenation. Similarly, the expendable character of Ilia has to be provided as none of the regular female crew members can be spared for the climactic fusion (the males even less). They become the symbols of Kirk's love affair, his embrace of the *Enterprise* and its family of friends, and his penetration of the vast, mysterious body of the alien communicant.

"I need you" is the phrase most often spoken by Kirk, and interdependence is the sustaining ache within the narrative; its ultimate expression, after the journey across the supine form of the visitor, is the logical mating that will be the start of another human voyage. Eehoes, naturally, of other Wise films, of the demanding child in *AUDREY ROSE*, the tense cameraderie of *SAND PEBBLES*. Also a magnificently visual venture into what, after *ALIEN*, one thinks of as Giger territory but which was already being examined by Isaac Asimov (credited here as 'special science consultant') back in the 1950s. Nimoy, as ever, was worth all the trouble, Persis Khambatta is hairlessly stunning, and familiarity should not be permitted to undervalue Shatner's performance as Kirk; he grabs his role with relish, humour and solid sympathy. But it's Robert Wise's triumph; regardless of the opinion of Trekkies, he has created a love story that is more than worthy of its heroes.

Philip Strick



THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE

(January 7—12)

Director: Bob Rafelson.
U.S.A., 1981.

Script: David Mamet. Based on the novel by James M. Cain.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Music: Michael Small.

Leading Players: Jack Nicholson (*Frank Chambers*), Jessica Lange (*Cora Papadakis*), John Colicos (*Nick Papadakis*), Michael Lerner (*Katz*), John P. Ryan (*Kennedy*), Anjelica Huston (*Madge*).
Metrocolor. Certificate X. 121 minutes.

'Frank Chambers the drifter-narrator of James Cain's novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934), refers several times to his 'rambling feet'. The phrase—and its repetition marks Cain's emphatic bluntness—recalls that romantic figure from our recent past, the rambling hobo. It has about it a ring of distant innocence. The novel's world, however, is bound in; and the novelist's

interests, for example in such things as insurance double-dealing, seem somehow curiously abstract. Frank becomes the hired man of Nick Papadakis, Old January, the owner of the Twin Oaks Tavern, an isolated gas-station diner. Nick's young wife, Cora, an Iowa beauty queen marooned in California before the mistaken compromise of her marriage, has a sexual appetite sharpened by boredom and unfocused longing. A murder is cobbled together.

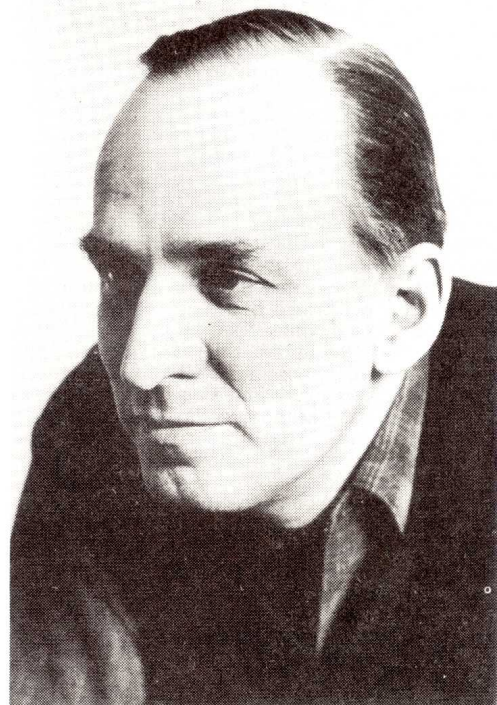
'Cain's Frank Chambers, whose ironic, pulp history has attracted film-makers as different as Visconti and Tay Garnett, is trapped by ancient misfortune, but a misfortune compounded by pathetic personal incompetence. Once a supposedly accomplished hustler, he loses to a fellow loser not only 250 dollars but also his 3dollar wristwatch. The Frank Chambers created by the screenwriter David Mamet (better known up to now for his plays) and the director Bob Rafelson—and in particular by the sly, slicked-down Jack Nicholson—in the latest film version of the novel is, however, a contrary figure.

'What has now become the period shading of Cain's novel, which advances chiefly through its dialogue, is most evident in the unspoken assumptions of its characters. In Rafelson's film, an immaculate, unostentatious reconstruction, the period registers visually: a weatherbeaten pack

of Camels; the thick off-white cups and plates of the diner. (The only unharmonious scene shows Frank and Cora hurrying past lines of the symbolically unemployed.) Within Rafelson's bounded, palpable world—California stretches away with placid indifference around the Twin Oaks—the illicit lovers seem knowing, if incompetent and ignorant, in an unmistakably modern way....

'Rafelson's *POSTMAN* is part serious homage to the *film noir* (and serious in a way which has nothing to do with the reverential motives behind the remake of a film such as *KING KONG* in which, incidentally, Jessica Lange, who here plays Cora, made her début). It opens with a black screen, plain credits and the sort of faultless, confident violin music asserting, rather than announcing, a foreboding tone. Lights appear, barely discernible spots; dawn seems to break, a cigarette glimmers; the drifter and his cigarette crosses from one side, car headlights from the other. The scrupulous look of the film, Sven Nykvist director of photography, veneers, however, what it still essentially is a story without psychological depth: sex, the irresistible demon, exercises an over-whelming, transporting power....'

Extracts from a review by John Pym, published in *Sight and Sound*



THE GRAND ILLUSIONS OF INGMAR BERGMAN

For nearly forty years, Ernst Ingmar Bergman has been creating the cinema at an average rate of a film a year, not counting shorts, television commercials, television plays, scripts set aside, and scripts directed by others. Uniquely among the grand masters of celluloid, however, his work reflects no apparent interest in commercial success, no urge to appeal to a wider international audience. When Hollywood names have been thrust upon him as part of the production price (Elliott Gould, David Carradine, James Whitmore) they have been absorbed almost without trace into Bergman's world. It's as though throughout his career he has been making one continuous film, personal and autobiographical, a diary of dreams, damnations and desires.

Bergman's genius has been to render from this private contemplation a miraculously public text. His sense of the dramatic, his command of his players, his mesmeric story-telling, all have been combined to display an anguish in which everyone can share. No other film-maker has so obsessively, so intelligently or so openly analysed what it has been like to live on this planet since the second world war.

He was born on July 14th 1918 in Uppsala where, as he has since recalled, a number of influences came to bear on him so vividly that they have recurred throughout his work. The bells of Uppsala Cathedral, the heavy furniture in his grandmother's flat which 'in my fantasy, conversed in a never-ending whisper', the nursery blind which, when lowered, somehow unleashed a horde of menacing shadows—all are combined, fifty years later, to create the hallucinatory atmosphere of *FACE TO FACE* in which Liv Ullmann, visiting her grandparents, sleeps fitfully among the shadows, cries and whispers of her nursery room. The film also restages the 'cupboard punishment' whereby the infant Bergman was locked by his father in a cupboard containing a supposed, unnameable menace. Not surprisingly, the characters in his films have often been subjected to confinement, sudden outbursts of violence and casual torture. Bergman's parents were 'sealed in iron casks of duty', his mother running a meticulous household for his father, a Lutheran Pastor who was chaplain to the Royal Swedish Court. The severity of this upbringing, leading to an inevitable conflict between love and rejection, faith and doubt, richly and fortuitously provided for Bergman what were to be both the message and the method of his career. The gift of a toy projector when he was ten served to complete the picture.

The spell cast both by the cinematic gadget and by the experiences it could produce is integral to Bergman's work; repeatedly his characters have paused in their remorse to gaze at unexpected dramas, microcosms of their own plight, flickering before them. In the later light-shows, often in the form of television programmes, the once-charming encounters have become instead something their viewers would prefer to have avoided. In *THE SERPENT'S EGG* the whirring projector shows stages in the collapse of victims of Nazi drug experiments, studied with urbane pride by the scientist responsible. Bergman's point is that we are all in front of the projector as well as behind it, victims as well as instigators, performers as well as observers.

The dialogue is maintained through one of Bergman's most familiar topics, the question of the artist's place in society. It can be traced from the broken-hearted ballet-dancer in *SUMMER INTERLUDE* to the unemployed tightrope-walker in *SERPENT'S EGG*, with some particularly emphatic outbursts represented by *NOW ABOUT THESE WOMEN* and *THE RITE*. In such films as *PERSONA* (a silent opera-singer), *THE SHAME* (musicians), and *AUTUMN SONATA* (concert pianist), the art-in-society debate can however be seen as part of a more general discussion about the predicament of the average human being in a collapsing environment. In the despairing words of the actor in *THE FACE*: "I have prayed one prayer in my life: use me, make use of me. But the Lord never understood how strong and devoted a servant I would have been, so I went unused. But that," he adds desperately, "is a lie too."

The sense of helplessness, which can again be linked with Bergman's childhood, haunts the film by which he is perhaps best known, *THE SEVENTH SEAL*. His search for God—or some acceptable

equivalent—dominated his screenplays up to the point at which, with the trilogy (*THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY*, *WINTER LIGHT*, *THE SILENCE*), he appeared to exorcise it. If God insisted on remaining silent; to pursue him was at worst to risk insanity (Harriet Andersson in *THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY* claims to see God as a giant spider) and at best futile (the priest in *WINTER LIGHT* is unable to deflect one of his parishioners from suicide). Although hints of both can be found in the later films, particularly in *CRIES AND WHISPERS* with its central character on the brink of death, and in the despondent priest in *SERPENT'S EGG*, from *THE SILENCE* onwards Bergman begins to favour a different kind of comfort.

The films of the 1950s, recurring journeys through the wasteland of agnosticism, suggested that while marriage as a partnership can be expected to be hell, marriage as a family unit holds the prospect of salvation. But in *THE SILENCE* he despairingly illuminated the obstacles confronting any kind of communication between generations, between sexes, between nations, between the conflicting demands of the human structure. The political events of the 1960s and 1970s, increasingly invading his work even when it was centred on his island home of Fårö, culminated in his flight from the Swedish tax authorities into a cathartic exile. But in *CRIES AND WHISPERS*, *SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE*, *FACE TO FACE*, and *AUTUMN SONATA*, he has found the same small crust of consolation. The priest expresses it in *SERPENT'S EGG*: "We live far away from God, so far away that no doubt He doesn't hear us when we pray to Him for help. So we must help each other. We must give each other the forgiveness that a remote God denies us." The sense of forgiveness underlies the cool appraisal of the unforgiveable in *FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES*, and its atrocious crime finds, if not a final absolution, at least a melancholy understanding.

Bergman has not prepared us for too sympathetic a hearing to the words of his clergymen, but his own view of his work interestingly provides a not dissimilar text. "It's wonderful to live in the collective world of film-making. I think it's an outgrowth of an enormous need for contact. I have a need to influence other people, to touch other people both physically and mentally, to communicate with them. Movies, of course, are a fantastic medium through which to touch other human beings, to reach them, to get them to think. To get them started, emotionally. That's probably the truest, deepest reason why I continue to make films."

Philip Strick

LECTURE/DISCUSSION

Philip Strick will discuss Ingmar Bergman's work in the cinema on Sunday March 28 at 4.15 p.m., after our screening of the complete version of *THE SILENCE*. The lecture will be illustrated with film extracts and admission will be free.

BERGMAN PART II

The Bergman season will continue in the next programme with screenings of all the films he has directed since *THE SILENCE* (except *FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES*, which we have included in this programme).

In addition to the titles included in this programme, Bergman also worked on the following films before 1963: *CRISIS* (Krisis), 1945 (script/direction); *IT RAINS ON OUR LOVE* (Det Regnar på vår Kärlek), 1946 (co-sc./direction); *WOMAN WITHOUT A FACE* (Kvinna utan Ansikte), 1947 (script); *A SHIP TO INDIA* (Skepp till Indialand), 1947 (script/direction); *MUSIC IN THE DARK* (Musik i mörker), 1948 (direction); *EVA*, 1948 (story/co-sc.); *PRISON* (Fängelse), 1949 (script/direction); *THIRST* (Törst), 1949 (direction); *TO JOY* (Till Glädje), 1950 (script/direction); *WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS* (Medan standen sover), 1950 (story); *THIS CAN'T HAPPEN HERE/HIGH TENSION* (Sånt Häder inte Här), 1950 (direction); *DIVORCED* (Frånskild), 1951 (story/co-sc.); *THE LAST COUPLE OUT* (Sista paret ut), 1956 (story/co-sc.); *SO CLOSE TO LIFE* (Nära livet), 1957 (co-sc./direction); *PLEASURE GARDEN* (Lustgården), 1961 (co-sc.).



FRENZY (Hets)

(January 10)

Director: Alf Sjöberg.
Sweden, 1944.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Martin Bodin.
Music: Hilding Rosenberg.
Leading Players: Stig Järrel (*Caligula*), Alf Kjellin (*Jan-Erik Widgren*), Mai Zetterling (*Bertha Olsson*), Olof Winnerstrand (*School Principle*), Gösta Cederlund (*Pippi*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 101 minutes.

Bergman's first screenplay, traces of which were also to be found later in *PRISON* and *PORT OF CALL*, was directly inspired by his own school experiences and, one suspects, by an uneasy adolescence. Although it has become a classic of classroom terrorism (alongside *ZERO DE CONDUITE* and *400 COUPS*), its interest today lies more in the moody clash between young love and a hostile environment which links the war-torn Europe of 1944 with the chilly background to *MARIONETTES*. Not that Bergman was concerned with international events in those days; they simply lurked in the shadows, personified by the sadistic schoolmaster Caligula, as a rationale for the futility of any kind of lasting relationship.

In his book on Bergman, Robin Wood says of *FRENZY*: "In many ways it's decidedly a director's film, stylistically striking and coherent: oppressive, louring shadows, high angle shots making the characters appear tiny and vulnerable, a sense of fatality and doom that completely undercuts the explicit optimism of the ending. The conception—and the fatalism—seem very much Bergman's. The film is particularly rich in father-figures: there are no less than four, covering a wide range of possibilities—1) The student-hero's actual father, insensitive, emotionally and spiritually dead, caring only about reputation and appearances. 2) 'Caligula', the Latin master who persecutes Jan-Erik in school and who is morally responsible for the death of the girl he has systematically tormented. 3) 'Birdie', the elderly form-master, comic-pathetic, kindly, who stands up against Caligula surprisingly firmly in one scene but ultimately proves ineffectual. 4) The headmaster, a conservative traditionalist with a conscience.

"Caligula, in Stig Järrel's justly famous performance, dominates the film: the character is more rounded than his counterparts in other early Bergman films. Yet the presentation is not entirely satisfactory. It is difficult to see why, having dropped unmistakably broad hints that it is Caligula who is Bertha's mysterious tormenter (she is for no adequately established reason terrified to reveal his identity to Jan-Erik), Sjöberg and Bergman maintain the pretence that the audience hasn't guessed this until over halfway through the film... What is interesting is the girl's helplessness, her utter failure to take the obvious

steps towards doing anything about her situation, her passive acceptance of Caligula as Doom. The acceptance is clearly masochistic, and seems unsubstantiated and unconvincing within the framework of the film—simply taken for granted. But it becomes convincing if we imagine her as a very young child at the mercy of seemingly omnipotent parents, with that nightmarish child's sense of impotence.

"The film is very strong in wish-fulfilment: Jan-Erik denouncing and striking Caligula before the headmaster; Jan-Erik denouncing and walking out on his father; the headmaster coming round to find him and make amends for the hurt he has been done, for which the school system is partly responsible; Caligula whining and pleading for pity on the staircase, begging for 'light' as Jan-Erik strides manfully and resolutely past him and out into the sunshine. The creative impulse behind these scenes is very clear; they are emotionally very effective, but one remains aware of the immaturity that underlies them."

PORT OF CALL (Hamnstad)

(January 10)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1948.
Script: Ingmar Bergman. Based on a story by Olle Länsgberg.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erland von Koch.
Leading Players: Nine-Christine Jösephsson (*Berit*), Bengt Eklund (*Gösta*), Mimi Nelson (*Gertrud*), Berta Hall (*Berit's Mother*), Birgitta Valberg (*Welfare Worker*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 100 minutes.

Gösta, a bitter and cynical sailor, meets a young factory girl, Berit. They fall in love but Berit, through no fault of her own, becomes involved with the police and is sent to an institution for girl delinquents. Some of the girls there are the dregs of humanity, others have been weak and easily led. Berit feels deeply sorry for one of the girls who is going to have a child she does not want, and helps her to have an abortion. Through this Berit is once again involved with the police, and she and her lover plan to run away; but then another alternative presents itself...

On the subject of *PORT OF CALL*, Peter Cowie has written: "Bergman admired the neo-realist achievement of Rossellini, and the film owes much to the Italian director with its unadorned description of Gothenburg and a suicide in the port for starters. The interior scenes, however, are unmistakably Bergman's: Berit, the girl rescued from the harbour by a seaman, seems condemned to a future of torment and misery. But, as ever, there is something mysteriously exhilarating about the long, Strindbergian conversations, and the film ends with summer in the air and the young lovers together against the world. 'We won't give up,' say Gösta. 'And soon it

will be summer' adds Berit with rather superficial hope. As Bergman has said in an interview, 'I have scarcely been influenced by Italian neo-realism, unless at the time of *PORT OF CALL*.'

"It was the time, too, of *PRISON*, made in the same year. But where the latter can be regarded as the first film in which Bergman's true originality as a stylist can be detected, *PORT OF CALL* is firmly couched in the realistic style of his first four films. One thinks not only of Rossellini but also of Carné's *QUAI DES BRÜMES*, and perhaps with more justification than in the case of *A SHIP FOR INDIA*. There is always the prospect that the lovers will take ship for the sunset, as it were, but the audience knows that they are destined to remain incarcerated in the hellish life of their city. The parallel with Carné's work is closer still in the establishing shots of the harbour. In both films a series of mixes show the cargoes being loaded aboard the ships to the accompaniment of stark, strongly-chorded music.

"The film closes with a powerful description of an abortion performed in a dingy basement on one of Berit's acquaintances from the institution. The camera angles used in this scarifying episode are very similar to those in *SO CLOSE TO LIFE* during Stina's delivery and Caecilia's delirium. Much of the dialogue too has echoes in Bergman's subsequent films. 'What's the use of tormenting each other?' asks Berit during a temporary quarrel. 'Loneliness is awful' is another familiar comment. 'I wish you were dead and I with you,' she shouts at her mother. It is as if human beings are closeted in a prison from which only death can bring escape, a brand of frantic claustrophobia."

WAITING WOMEN (Kvinnors Väntan)

(January 17)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1952.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Anita Björk (*Rakel*), Mai-Britt Nilsson (*Märta*), Eva Dahlbeck (*Karin*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Fredrik Lobelius*), Birger Malmsten (*Martin Lobelius*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 105 minutes.

The three Lobelius brothers, Fredrik (Björnstrand), Eugen (Karl-Arne Holmsten), and Martin (Malmsten) have arranged to meet their wives at their summer home on one of the Swedish islands. It will be a crowded reunion; as well as the children, other relatives and friends are around. As they wait for the men to arrive, the women discuss the hopes and fears of their various marriages; Anita, the eldest, mourns the sterility of her relationship with Paul ("Never any warmth or contact—we've become two nodding mandarins"), while Maj, the youngest, secretly plans to elope with her lover, Henrik, and comments impatiently on the other women's clear ignorance of real love. The three Lobelius wives then tell their own stories: Rakel has been unfaithful to Eugen, Märta has only recently decided to marry Martin although she has already had a child by him, and Karin has been able to work out a fresh, contented relationship with her pompous husband Fredrik. At sunset, the men arrive by boat and the celebrations start while Maj and Henrik slip away across the water.

To rediscover *WAITING WOMEN* is to be reminded of the gentle, charming melancholy with which Bergman's 'summer years' were so appealingly filled. With *SUMMER INTERLUDE* on one side and *SUMMER WITH MONIKA* on the other, *WAITING WOMEN* has the lazy sensuality of a hot holiday afternoon, a timeless reflection on matters of possible consequence which, in the sunlight, have a manageably insubstantial quality. Each of the film's episodes has the potential for grim tragedy, and yet from each the pain is rippled away in the telling, so that against all odds the mood at the end of the day is one of fulfilment and joy. The young lovers, certain they can make a better job of their undying passion, elope furtively by motor-boat (which, of course, takes a while to start) while their elders, fully aware of the secret, nod benignly. "Let them have their summer," says Paul, "there'll be time enough for cares and wisdom." Of the three stories, the darkest is that of Märta, who tells the story of her pregnancy in a complex

interweaving of flashbacks from the labour ward and the process of birth itself. The sequence is spellbinding, not only for its innumerable echoes of other Bergmans, but for the unfailing energy of its inventiveness and depth. All the trademarks are in evidence—the use of mirrors, of water, of family interference, of seduction-after-exhibitionism, of the artist as free spirit untrammelled by mundane considerations. Remarkably, a whole chunk of it turns out to be a first run for FACE TO FACE—the girl alone in her grandparents' apartment, with its decorative blinds, heavy furniture, and unspeakable menace behind the glass of the front door. The church bells are a perpetual symphony to mark the mood of the passing hours. And where Rakel's earlier seduction had been in full sunshine, Märta's is in mysterious darkness, from which her lover's hand, all she can see of him, beckons in irresistible invitation. Later, as she studies her pregnant self delightedly in a hall mirror (and the passing Bergman smiles appreciatively) the shadows close again; a baby chuckles at her in the street, but her response is cut short by the intrusion of a crippled passer-by. And as, under gas, she tackles the birth pains, her visions are of remorse and terror, an axe chopping into a doll, until the flowing water washes the fear away and she glides placidly off with the baby in her arms. In later years, Bergman was to be less certain that a new life could absolve all the torments of the past, but in WAITING WOMEN his honesty was less cruel, his sentimentality less abrasive. And the cinema, whether or not we recognised it at the time, was the richer for it.

Philip Strick

SUMMER INTERLUDE (Sommarlek)

(January 17)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1951.
Script: Ingmar Bergman, Herbert Grevenius.
Based on a story by Bergman.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Maj-Britt Nilsson (*Marie*), Birger Malmsten (*Henrik*), Alf Kjellin (*David*), Georg Funkquist (*Uncle Erland*), Renée Björling (*Aunt Elisabeth*), Mimmi Pollak (*Heinrich's Aunt*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate U. 96 minutes.

Marie is a ballerina of 28 who is rehearsing for *Swan Lake*. Someone sends her a parcel containing the diary of her lover Henrik who died thirteen years previously. Stirred by her memories she returns by boat to the island where the love affair took place, and recalls the various incidents of the idyllic summer that had ended abruptly with Henrik's accidental death. Her Uncle Erland had comforted her, but only—as she discovers—because he has designs on her himself, and she returns to her ballet work. Gradually, as she shares her grief with the ballet master and with David, a reporter who is in love with her, she realises that there is the possibility of a new life for her.

"SUMMER INTERLUDE is the earliest Bergman film in which one feels in the presence of a great artist, not merely a gifted or precocious or ambitious one. It is already fully characteristic of mature Bergman in its structure of flashbacks contained within a strict twenty-four hour continuity. Particularly it anticipates WILD STRAWBERRIES: the journey at once backwards (into a re-lived past) and forwards (in terms of spiritual progress).

"The importance of SUMMER INTERLUDE in relation to Bergman's early films is immediately evident: it both continues and develops the characteristic preoccupation with youth and the vulnerability of innocence. But here the transition from innocent youth to experienced adulthood is really explored, and with it the possibility of coming to terms with the world of experience. The film's most distinctive characteristic is perhaps its feeling for nature; I know of no other Bergman film where it is felt as a pervasive influence to the same extent—seas, sunlight, clouds, a precise sense of the time of year and time of day, images of natural fertility counterpointing the development of the relationship. Bergman uses nature to express the natural processes of life and death, the

theme of transience so dear to the romantic poets. The film's poignant emotional effect arises largely from the anti-thesis of summer and autumn in the counterpointing of flashbacks and present time.

"Against the real world of nature, transience and decay is set the ideal romantic world of classical ballet, formalised, traditional, 'frozen' in time: the mortal dancer seen in the context of an undying tradition. The ballet in question, *Swan Lake*, is itself concerned with a doomed love; the function of the ballet sequences is central and complex. Bergman's handling of them could serve as a model for filmed classical ballet. There is a perfect balance between his sense of theatre and his sense of cinema: his every shot acknowledges the necessary theatricality of classical ballet, the necessity to preserve with fidelity the stage compositions and formal groupings, yet within these limitations he uses the cinema's resources of camera movement and editing with the utmost sensitivity in relation to the music and the dancers' movements. If the feeling for nature in the film tempts one to think of Renoir, certain of the theatre scenes remind one irresistibly of the ballet studies of Degas, with their affectionately ironic juxtapositions of physical grace and physical awkwardness."

Adapted from *Ingmar Bergman* by Robin Wood

SAWDUST AND TINSEL (Gycklarnas Afton)

(January 24)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Hilding Bladh, Sven Nykvist.
Music: Karl-Birger Blomdahl.
Leading players: Harriet Andersson (*Anna*), Åke Grönberg (*Albert*), Hasse Edman (*Frans*), Anders Ed (*Frost*), Gudrun Brost (*Alma*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Sjoberg*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 90 minutes.

Albert is the corpulent and lecherous owner of a travelling circus. His mistress is Anna, a voluptuous equestrienne in the troupe. At one of the small towns where the circus stops, Albert visits his wife to plead for the revival of their marriage, but is rejected, while Anna is callously seduced by Frans, a young actor in the town. During the gala performance given by the circus that evening, Frans taunts Albert about his liaison with Anna and the result is a bloody fight in which Albert is utterly defeated. He tries to shoot himself but the revolver misfires and he has to be satisfied with shooting the circus bear instead.

Finally, as the troupe moves off at dawn, Albert is seen trudging along with Anna behind the caravans.

This is the most literally picaresque of Bergman's films, though the idea that self-knowledge is gained by travel is prevalent in most of his work. It is also his first historical setting (the time is the turn of the century). Albert is a brilliantly-realised figure, resembling the Emil Jannings heroes of VAUDEVILLE and THE BLUE ANGEL, and the theme of the film, similarly, is illusion. As Albert says: 'to be a cuckold is nothing; it's to know it that is terrible'. And to some degree the sawdust kicked in his face by Frans at the end of the fight is symbolic of the destruction of his illusions. This final fight seems to signify the triumph of the intellect over emotion (a situation that is reversed in THE FACE). Albert is not the only character to be disillusioned, for Anna is seduced by Frans in return for what he maintains is a valuable amulet, and finds later that it is a worthless trinket. She and Albert have to remain together, bound by self-betrayal, perhaps the most pathetic and grotesque couple in all Bergman's work.

Bergman's technique here is definitely superior to any of his previous films. The opening flashback, a model of its kind, tells how the wife of Frost, the clown, had bathed nude in front of some soldiers until Frost had stormed down to the beach, hauled his wife on to his back and truded along the path to their tent. But he had collapsed under the strain. The blinding chalky light, the huge close-ups of the tears pouring down Frost's humiliation is parallel to that of Albert, while his wife's shameless display is equivalent to that of Anna.

The use of masks and mirrors in the film is fascinating. Like Marie's makeup in SUMMER INTERLUDE, the circus greasepaint on Frost has an allegorical significance — an attempt to hide from life and to distort its real countenance. The mirrors are again used to emphasise how much the characters are devoid of real depth and rely on superficial appearances. In other Bergman films the mirror serves to stress selfish and soul-searching tendencies, but here it illustrates how neither Anna nor Albert can face reality. When Anna is being seduced by Frans in his dressing-room, his face is reflected at an angle in a mirror at the left of the frame; she is bewitched by the suavity of his manner without realising that he is in fact deceitful.

Much of the craftsmanship of THE FACE is anticipated in this film — the opening shots of caravans silhouetted against the sky were to reappear in the later work, and rain is similarly used to inject a feeling of depression and misery into the narrative. This thirteenth film of Bergman's is the most intense product of his middle period.

Adapted from *Ingmar Bergman* by Peter Cowie





SUMMER WITH MONIKA (Sommaren med Monika)

(January 24)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden: 1953.
Script: Ingmar Bergman, P. A. Fogelström. Based on the novel by P. A. Fogelström.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading players: Harriet Anderson (*Monika*), Lars Ekborg (*Harry*), John Haryson (*Lelle*), Georg Skarstedt (*Harry's Father*), Dagmar Ebbesen (*Harry's Aunt*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate A. 97 minutes.

A footloose young couple from the city slums steal a boat and spend a brief ecstatic summer on an island in the Stockholm archipelago. But autumn looms, and food and cash run out. Remarkable for its direct, almost documentary style, its erotic candour and the hoydenish performance of Harriet Andersson (who became not only Bergman's mistress but also the vital pulse in several of his greatest achievements on screen), the film underlines Bergman's vision of life as a blend of sensual thrill and misery.

As with *SUMMER INTERLUDE*, the theme is simple—but on this occasion the disillusion is brutal rather than poignant, the style naturalistic rather than romantic. There are no complexities of technique. Monika is cynical, vicious animalistic, and consistently erotic; she is not a romantic like Marie in *SUMMER INTERLUDE*, who exclaims joyfully "we're in the same beautiful soap-bubble". Rather, she is the naked epitome of a series of characters in Bergman's work who are realistic and bitter in outlook (the ballet-master in *SUMMER INTERLUDE*, Frans in *SAWDUST AND TINSEL*, Vergerus in *THE FACE*). Monika does not deliberately plan to abandon Harry when their summer is finished; she is an opportunist, and therefore when the time comes has scarcely any remorse in turning to another lover. Moreover, the idea of a firm marriage frightens her. Harry, like the young Henrik of *SUMMER INTERLUDE*, is portrayed in a sensitive light in order to stress his inferior strength of character—but unlike Henrik he does not die in the full flood of joy, and has to undergo terrible disillusionment instead. He is the romantic, and like the romantics in Zola's novels, utterly humiliated in the end.

SUMMER WITH MONIKA demonstrates Bergman's amazing capacity for treating his story in the most suitable way. As he wrote on one occasion, "the theme is and remains fundamental in all film-making; the form must submit to it". After *SO CLOSE TO LIFE*, his most documentary and naturalistic work is to be seen in *MONIKA*. The girl herself is always shown in erotic and defiant guise, achieved by such methods as making her chew gum or crunch an apple loudly, allowing her hair to drop down in fronds around her face and making her entice

Harry into a sleeping-bag with her. Her love for him is exhausted with the summer, and this waning in her passion is suggested by making her room in Stockholm deliberately gloomy to contrast with the bright sunlight of the summer. As in *SUMMER INTERLUDE*, Bergman establishes connections between the beginning and end of the adventure; at the outset, Monika combs her hair in the mirror near the fish-shop where she works, and at the close, Harry studies himself miserably in that same mirror. Another resemblance to *SUMMER INTERLUDE* is echoed by the throng of dancers joined by Monika and Harry on a jetty one evening. They have to indulge in this pastime because their love is beginning to fade—whereas in the earlier film Marie and Henrik, needing no such diversion, turn away from exactly the same type of social gathering.

Adapted from Ingmar Bergman by Peter Cowie

JOURNEY INTO AUTUMN (Kvinnodröm)

(January 31)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden: 1955.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Hilding Bladh.
Leading Players: Eva Dahlbeck (*Susanne*), Harriet Andersson (*Doris*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Söderby*), Ulf Palme (*Henrik Lobelius*), Inga Landgré (*Mrs. Lobelius*), Sven Lindberg (*Palle*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 86 minutes.

Harriet Andersson, Bergman's most blatant erotic symbol, is unquestionably the most dramatic and forthright character in *JOURNEY INTO AUTUMN*. Sandwiched between *LESSON IN LOVE* and *SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT*, it has tended to be left in the shadows by the pyrotechnics of the other products of Bergman's 'middle period', but it is a beautifully marshalled film, narrating the fruitless efforts of two couples to establish satisfactory relationships between themselves.

Susanne and Doris are the proprietor and leading model respectively of a fashion salon in Stockholm. During a visit to Göteborg, Susanne attempts to rekindle the love of a middle-aged businessman, Henri Lobelius, while Doris is courted pathetically by a dignified but elderly Consul. The two episodes are dovetailed cleverly into one another, so that by the end of the film several similarities between them have become noticeable (the Swedish title literally means 'Women's Dreams', which emphasises the contrast between yearning and disillusionment governing the parallel stories).

Firstly, in each case a third party ruins what hopes there might be of firm ties being established between the hypothetical lovers: the Consul's daughter bursts in, demands more money from her father, and castigates him for trying to seduce a young woman; the wife of Henri Lobelius finds him in a hotel room with Susanne and similarly attacks him for his behaviour. The main theme of the film is a reiteration of Bergman's conviction that a man needs a woman desperately, not so much in a sexual as in a maternal sense. Marta Lobelius touches on the truth when she confronts Susanne and says "you want to have a child by him in order to hold him". The Consul's wife is away in an asylum and so he courts the first smart girl he comes across, but his attempts are foiled by his daughter who revives in him the strong ties of marital attachment.

The subsidiary theme of the film is misunderstanding between man and woman. It does not enter Doris' head that the Consul might desire anything more satisfactory from her than physical love, and so in pity she attempts to seduce him in his home. Similarly, the Consul believes it impossible to win Doris' affection except by indulging her childish fancies, and so makes a fool of himself at the funfair. In the other relationship, Lobelius thinks that he knows Susanne and sends her the final letter of reconciliation, but of course she destroys it; equally, Susanne feels she understands Lobelius and thus seduces him in the hotel room. The parallel and affinities between the two episodes are numerous and subtle.

(Adapted from Peter Cowie's
INGMAR BERGMAN monograph)

A LESSON IN LOVE (En lektion i Kärlek)

(January 31)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden: 1954.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Martin Bodin.
Music: Dag Wirén.
Leading Players: Eva Dahlbeck (*Marianne Erneman*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Dr. David Erneman*), Yvonne Lombard (*Susanne*), Åke Grönberg (*Carl Adam*), Olof Winnerstrand (*Professor Henrik Erneman*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 95 minutes.

One of Bergman's most underestimated and neglected films. One guesses that Bergman himself doesn't attach great importance to it—it gives the impression of having been made with unusual facility, in a mood of sustained relaxation, a loose improvisation in which idea is allowed to follow idea without care for solidity of structure or stylistic unity. Important flashbacks that carry the main emotional weight of the film are strung on an apparently trivial story-line involving bets about kissing a woman during a railway journey—and it takes a certain conscious effort on the spectator's part to relate into a coherent pattern all the seemingly disparate flashback episodes.

The film, then, is not perfect. But it seems to me a great mistake to regard it as trivial; on the contrary, it is one of the major works of this period, notable for its freedom and spontaneity of invention, its emotional richness, warmth and generosity, its effortless flexibility of tone. The flexibility is evident both on a large scale (the inclusion of so many different moods within a single film) and in small details; see, for example, the absolutely natural transition during the 'wedding' flashback from the slapstick-comedy collapse of the ceiling when Marianne tries to hang herself, to the entirely serious 'It's for life, David,' almost immediately afterwards, to the intended best man whom she has abruptly decided to marry.

The improvisatory freedom of construction allows Bergman a satisfying inclusiveness in his treatment of human relationships. Husband and wife, husband and mistress, wife and lover, father and daughter, man and parents; relationships between three generations; different stages in the development of attitudes to marriage, from Nix's adolescent demand for idealism and purity, through the varying contacts, compromises and breakdowns of the Ernemanns, to the stable but very limited relationship of the grandparents; different stages in the development of social attitudes, from the grandparents' unquestioning acceptance of the permanence of the marriage union to the breakdown of such conventions in the next generation and the consequently more casual attitude to marriage and family; in *LESSON IN LOVE* Bergman covers all this with a marvellously sure touch. The structure may look loose but the proportions are perfect.

The film, in its rich profusion of ideas, proved a mine of raw material for the more consciously worked films to come. *SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT* and *WILD STRAWBERRIES* might seem to have little in common were it not for their common ancestry in *LESSON IN LOVE*. *SMILES* takes up and develops what one might call the spatial aspect of the earlier film, its juxtaposing and comparing of different love relationships; *WILD STRAWBERRIES* takes up and greatly extends its temporal aspect. The family reunion flashback of *A LESSON IN LOVE*, with all three generations interlacing, was clearly Bergman's starting point for the later film, with its detailed anticipations of the memory sequence of Uncle Aron's name-day. The structure of *WILD STRAWBERRIES*—memories and dreams used to build up a dense and complex impression of the past, all contained within the twenty-four hours time-unity of a journey—is in all essentials taken over from *LESSON IN LOVE*, except that in the later film one is very much more aware of the intellectual control and virtuosity behind the construction. But the most startling (because so unexpected) anticipation of a later work is to be found in the portrayal of father and daughter (by Björnstrand and Andersson), whereby we suddenly find ourselves confronted with the embryo of *THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY*.

Adapted from Ingmar Bergman by Robin Wood.



SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT (Sommarnattens leende)

(February 3)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1955.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Eva Dahlbeck (*Desirée Armfeldt*), Ulla Jacobsson (*Anne Egerman*), Harriet Andersson (*Petra*), Margit Carlquist (*Charlotte Malcolm*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Frederik Egerman*), Jarl Kulle (*Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 108 minutes.

"SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT was one of the first films to establish Bergman's reputation in Great Britain. One might be tempted to regard it, ignorantly, as an early work, and to try to see his subsequent films as growing out of it. Of course it is no such thing; and now that so much more of Bergman's earlier work has become accessible, one can see that SMILES is less a beginning than an end: it has something of the nature of a combined culmination and retrospect, its achieved perfection associating with its consolidating rather than exploratory character. It marks Bergman's farewell to Eva Dahlbeck and Harriet Andersson: or, more precisely, to the Dahlbeck and Andersson personalities built up through the succession of films from WAITING WOMEN. When they reappear (in SO CLOSE TO LIFE and THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY respectively) it is in roles quite distinct from Bergman's earlier use of them; or in that more deliberate retrospect NOW ABOUT THESE WOMEN. In SMILES, both actresses give the definitive versions of the *personae* they had developed. The film offers a foretaste as well: among the girls in the play Eva Dahlbeck is appearing in near the start of the film one notices Bibi Andersson, who was to become prominent in Bergman's next four films.

"It is also possible to see Ulla Jacobsson's role as a reference back to those taken earlier by Mai-Britt Nilsson; though the character is altogether slighter and shallower. The change is significant. The intensity with which Bergman could feel the vulnerability of young love—his balancing of its immense value with its frailty—was the great quality of SUMMER INTERLUDE, and of the central episode of WAITING WOMEN. But he had passed beyond it when he made SMILES, and doesn't attempt to treat it with the same intimacy and inwardness. If one found any fault at all with the film, in fact, it might be in the almost cruelly ironic treatment of Henrik, the young son by a previous marriage of the lawyer Egerman (Björnstrand), studying for the church and hopelessly struggling with unmanageable sexual feelings. It can be felt, however, to balance the irony with which the amorous entanglements of Henrik's elders are also treated; the movement towards establishing a balance of sympathies between idealistic young love and the

compromises of Experience that Bergman began rather clumsily in WAITING WOMEN, reaches its final and perfect expression in SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT.

"The eight main characters resolve themselves in the course of the film, with what is felt as a perfect appropriateness, into four couples: Egerman and his mistress (Dahlbeck); Henrik (Björn Bjelvenstam) and his father's young second wife (Ulla Jacobsson); Count Malcolm (Jarl Kulle) and his own wife (the remarkable Margit Carlquist—sadly, almost her only appearance in a Bergman film); the maid Petra (Harriet Andersson) and the coachman Frid (Åke Fridell). None is exempt from the pervasive irony; on the other hand, none is treated without sympathy. Count Malcolm gets rather less than anyone else: he anticipates Don Juan in THE DEVIL'S EYE (played by the same actor), except that he is a Don Juan who hasn't yet recognized his own emptiness. The complex interaction of the characters in the course of the intrigue makes the film a continually shifting kaleidoscope in which different relationships and attitudes to love become juxtaposed, to be compared and evaluated . . ."

Extracts from *Ingmar Bergman* by Robin Wood

THE SEVENTH SEAL (Det sjunde inseglet)

(February 17)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1957.
Script: Ingmar Bergman. Based on his play "Träsmåning".
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Max von Sydow (*Knight*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Squire*), Bengt Ekerot (*Death*), Nils Poppe (*Jof*), Bibi Andersson (*Mia*), Åke Fridell (*Plog*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 95 minutes.

Probably the best-known film of all Bergman's work as a result of its vivid medieval canvas—a natural starting-point for classroom discussion throughout the world—THE SEVENTH SEAL had such a shattering effect when it first appeared that even now it is hard to disentangle the film from all the recollections and associations of the time. Bergman has been a hit at Cannes the previous year with SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT, but the impact of SEVENTH SEAL whisked him smartly out of the brittle Scandinavian comedy genre into which critics had confidently assigned him. The new film had no crystal glitter or poised charm; it seethed with anguish, it had a brutal grandeur, and it was astonishingly beautiful (to be honest, the girls caught the eye as much as Fischer's camerawork).

It was, too, a bit of a puzzle, which of course did nothing to harm its reputation, with abrupt shifts from one scene to the next, SEVENTH SEAL gave the impression of missing chunks of significant action on the way—it was almost a sketch for some other epic, a scattering of elegant brush-strokes for a painting yet to be completed. There was some uncertainty, for example, about the chess game as a device for keeping Death at bay; the game hinted at an interpretation of the film's characters as pieces on the board, but they obstinately refused to fit. What were we to make of the Knight's conclusions, if any, and what was the significance of the only speech uttered by the fascinating Gunnell Lindblom, sinking to her knees at the end? Who, for that matter, were the figures trailing from Death's cloak across the horizon? From such questions, innumerable school essays have doubtless been born.

Considering the film afresh, as must be one of the annual (at least) pleasures of this life, one can admit without much of a struggle that Bergman has transcended it with everything he has made since, well, 1960 (that would be from the trilogy onwards). I have the feeling that neither he nor his audience could have endured PERSONA if it had happened in the 1950s—both he and we needed time to mature cinematically—but any contest between that one and SEVENTH SEAL leaves the old favourite little better than a charade, an agnostic pantomime, almost a jolly footnote to the magnificent text of Bergman's career. But of course one avoids tapping the SEVENTH SEAL glass with too fierce a hammer. Flaws and all, it matters too much to be thrown aside.

Why? Perhaps the answer lies in its very roughness, the fact that like a medieval passion play it externalises simple faiths and simple doubts and needs must settle for basic truths. Home from the ludicrous chaos of the Crusades, a man of honour must discover something of value in the plague-stricken country he is about to leave. And peace, he realises a little obviously, is to be found with the family of a mere clown, eating wild strawberries in the afternoon sun and hallucinating gently about the Virgin Mary. Thanks to his delaying tactics, they escape the Black Death to continue enjoying their immunity from the other plague, that of faithlessness, as suffered by the blacksmith and his wife and echoed, in another sense, by the flagellants and the dying witch. Gentler in those days, Bergman could allow some fragile happiness as he pressed on into the darkness. With SEVENTH SEAL the summer days, in their simplicity, were drawing to a close. Which is probably why, after all, one now treasures them like old photographs.

Philip Strick

WILD STRAWBERRIES (Smultronstället)

(February 17)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1958.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Victor Sjöström (*Professor Isak Borg*), Bibi Andersson (*Sara*), Ingrid Thulin (*Marianne*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Evald*), Folke Sundquist (*Anders*), Björn Bjelvenstam (*Viktor*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate A. 95 minutes.

Later work was to demonstrate that Bergman could not persuade himself to be satisfied with the quest of SEVENTH SEAL that appeared to find its destination in WILD STRAWBERRIES, two matching halves of the same chart. With THE FACE, he broke open the debate once more, and with the possible ironic exception of CRIES AND WHISPERS serenity was never again to be found in his films. As a result, the perfection of WILD STRAWBERRIES is enhanced by its isolation; immaculate on a plateau of acceptance, it has been unruffled by later storms, and its neat balance of pain with comfort, sorrow with joy, emptiness with brimming fulfilment, has remained in perpetual harmony. As a film of love, it has uniquely at its centre the peacefully unselfish performance of Victor Sjöström, grand old man of Swedish silent cinema, before whose presence lesser matters of doubt and despair could be allowed to fade away. It wasn't just the sanction of his participation that gave WILD STRAWBERRIES its prestigious character—but the sense that through the making of the film Sjöström had himself found an absolution for private losses. Bergman had been lyrical before, but this one was for real.

Its theme, as had been the case for so much of Bergman's work in the 1950s, is the coherence of family relationships. Professor Isak Borg, lonely as the nightmare of himself confronting his own coffin in the bleak highway of shuttered windows and timeless clocks, finds the solution to his problem of death-in-life in a pilgrimage through the territory he knew as a young man. In the evocation of the family birthday party, in the memory of his parents by a summer lakeside, he discovers the love that slipped so long ago out of his own marriage and made it empty. The glade in which he witnesses his wife's infidelity is not so far removed from the cottage in WAITING WOMEN where another girl was driven to desperation by her husband's frigidity, but in WILD STRAWBERRIES, with its casual timeslips through which the old man is present at events that passed some fifty years ago, the old pains come up sharp and new.

The bitter existence of the Almans (the squabbling couple rescued from the roadside for a brief, noisy ride in Borg's car), the glacial quality of the junior Borg (forbidding as only Björnstrand could be) with his empty marriage, even the shell that is now Borg's ancient mother, these are Bergman's ruthless indications of the consequences of conducting lives without the release of genuine affection. He offsets them by means of Max von Sydow's cheerful garage hand,

Bibi Andersson's extrovert seeker after the ideal match, and Ingrid Thulin's radiant wife allowed at last to have both husband and baby. When the Professor's own parents, rediscovered at last at the sunlit water's edge, wave to him in placid welcome, we might just believe that it's enough to have been part of one generation rather than having to survive to be part of the next. That stretch of water separating Isak from his past, however, still has to be crossed before, with a smile, the Professor can rest. In the years that have followed, the Bergman landscape has never again been able to offer such an innocent journey.

Philip Strick



THE FACE (Ansiktet)

(February 28)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1958.
Script: Ingmar Bergman.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Max von Sydow (*Albert Emmanuel Vogler*), Ingrid Thulin (*Manda Vogler*), Åke Fridell (*Tubal*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*Dr. Vergerus*), Bibi Andersson (*Sara Lindqvist*), Bengt Ekerot (*Spegel*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 99 minutes.

"I have worked out that if I see a film which has a running time of one hour, I sit through 27 minutes of complete darkness. Thus when I show a film I am guilty of deceit: I am using an apparatus which is constructed to take advantage of a certain human weakness. I am either an impostor or, in the case where an audience is willing to be taken in, a conjurer." At the time when *THE FACE* first appeared, the Bergman debate had reached such proportions that the director's refusal to attempt another *WILD STRAWBERRIES* was seen by many critics as a confession of weakness. He was to be taken at his own word—as a charlatan. But for those who had taken the earlier films as a signal for symbol-hunting, *THE FACE* prompted even more elaborate claims of religious allegory. It was clearly an account of the Crucifixion, complete with Resurrection, and some arguable hints of heresy. Such pretension was hardly excusable, and whether as phoney or as fanatic, Bergman was quickly out of favour.

Set in 19th century Sweden, *THE FACE* begins with the arrival of a travelling showman, Vogler, at a customs post at one of the entrances to Stockholm. His troupe includes his wife, who travels disguised as a boy, his witchlike grandmother, and Tubal, the ingratiating compère to the show. Vogler's act consists of conjuring tricks, magic lantern performances, and the controversial new 'science' of mesmerism, and it is to investigate the claims of this 'science' that he is required by the authorities to give a demonstration at the customs post before a committee consisting of a nervous consul, a sceptical chief constable, and a highly cynical medical officer, Vergerus. During the demonstration, Vogler is apparently killed, and Vergerus insists on conducting an autopsy on his corpse. The dissection turns into a nightmare for the scientist, who finds that cold reason and logic are no match for the authentic mysteries of life after death...

As we can now see in the perspective of Bergman's subsequent work, *THE FACE* is one of his key films, illustrating through the doubts and confusions of its central characters Bergman's harsh opinion of himself and his achievements. The self-criticism can be traced in origin to his Lutheran upbringing, and he'd be the first to recognise this, but it does nothing to assuage the guilt. The burden of blame, best conveyed by the haggard features of Von Sydow, has also been carried in recent years by Erland Josephson; its opposite, the burden of cold, absolute certainty, has been carried most habitually in Bergman's films by Gunnar Björnstrand whose dark, dead eyes and rat-trap mouth are enough to convey inflexible prejudice without a line being spoken. Since *THE FACE*, there have been innumerable harassed illusionists in Bergman's gallery: the painter in *Hour of the Wolf*, the violinist in *THE SHAME*, the forger in *A PASSION*—all played by Von Sydow. All have been savaged by their environment, their ultimate fate uncertain. In the case of *A PASSION*, the central figure is actually pulled apart by the celluloid itself, processed so that his shape is no more than a mass of colour dots on the screen. It's an ending which reaffirms the Bergman apology that he is using deceit to portray deception (an apology made, of course, with such powerful irony that regret and fierce, shoulder-shrugging pride take most of the humility out of it), but despite the denials the inexplicable magic remains.

If it were no more than a horror film (and it has jolted many an audience in its time), *THE FACE* would be justly rated as a classic. But the real terror it contains is the cliff-edge of doubt on which Bergman found himself poised and over which he has been falling ever since.

Philip Strick



THE DEVIL'S EYE (Djävulens öga)

(February 28)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1960.
Script: Ingmar Bergman. Based on a Danish radio play.
Photography: Gunnar Fischer.
Music: Motif from *Scarlatti*.
Leading Players: Jarl Kulle (*Don Juan*), Bibi Andersson (*Britt-Marie*), Stig Järrel (*Satan*), Nils Poppe (*Pastor*), Gertrud Fridh (*Renata*), Sture Lagerwall (*Pablo*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 90 minutes.

"A woman's chastity is a sty in the Devil's eye," a proverb said to be of Irish origin, is claimed by Bergman as the basis for his comedy. Suffering, the Devil sends Don Juan to effect a cure by seducing a Swedish pastor's innocent daughter. Bergman revels in the attack on petty bourgeois pretence, and the best scenes (particularly the entry of the Statue that consigns the Great Lover to the inferno) stem from his 1955 stage production of Molière's *Don Juan*.

If *SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT* appears theatrical in treatment, *THE DEVIL'S EYE* is even more so. Bergman constructed a delightful role for Björnstrand who, in plain black and with

shooting script conveniently to hand, introduces each of the three 'acts' of the film. This effectively distances the spectator from the story, and heightens the comedy. The scenes are theatrical in design and movement, as well as in the manner of exits and entrances. In no other film except *SO CLOSE TO LIFE* is the camera so static, particularly in the sequences inside the pastor's house. But Bergman transcends the restrictions of the theatre by his incessant use of closeups. Each occurs at a decisive moment, to catch the slightest nuance of reaction to various insinuations or jests, or to detect a change in attitude (as in the case of Renata yielding to Pablo, Britt-Marie yielding to Don Juan).

The final episode in *Hell* is a masterly technical exposition. While an 'Ear Devil' uses his fantastic powers of hearing to relay to Satan and Don Juan the progress of the couple's wedding night above them on Earth, Bergman shows Don Juan in the centre of the group. Then, as Don Juan retreats towards his couch where he is sentenced to suffer dreams for many years as a result of his failure on Earth, Bergman switches to a fairly long shot of him, standing robed in black in a doorway flanked with marble pillars and on a wide marble floor. The use of this camera setup lends to his last words ("I remain Don Juan, despiser of God and the Devil") a form of diabolical majesty that is perfectly in keeping with the tone of the film.

Bergman had conducted considerable research into the various tales and incidents of the life of Don Juan in poetry and fiction. He includes in the film the sinister death of Don Juan as described most vividly in Tirso de Malina's *Burlador de Sevilla*. Don Juan is seated regally at supper (Bergman uses high long shots to emphasise his splendid isolation), when a thundering at the door brings Pablo scurrying to admit a bearded statue. In the film there is no dialogue because Jarl Kulle is narrating the story in a flashback, but the words from Malina are pictorially represented by Bergman. "Give me your hand, be not afraid," demands the statue, "give me your hand". Don Juan replies: "What do you mean? I afraid? Oh, fire is devouring me! Do not burn me with your fire!" The scene is similarly described in the final canto of Byron's *Don Juan*, and although the audience is left to guess at the reason for the statue's sudden visit (the success of Losey's *DON GIOVANNI* will doubtless have restored the balance somewhat for today's audiences) the sequence is immensely powerful in its own right.

Adapted from Ingmar Bergman by Peter Cowie

VIRGIN SPRING (Jungfrukällan)

(March 10)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1959.
Script: Ulla Isaksson. Based on the fourteenth-century ballad "Töres dotter i Vänge".
Photography: Sven Nykvist.
Music: Erik Nordgren.
Leading Players: Max von Sydow (*Herr Töre*), Birgitta Valberg (*Fru Märeta*), Gunnel Lindblom (*Ingeri*), Birgitta Pettersson (*Karin*), Axel Düberg (*Thin Herdsman*), Tor Isedal (*Mute Herdsman*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 88 minutes.

If, after *WILD STRAWBERRIES*, there had to be considerable doubt as to how Bergman could begin to equal his masterpiece, much of that uncertainty seems to have been illustrated by his own choice of subjects. In the same year, the serenities of *WILD STRAWBERRIES* were sharply contradicted by *SO CLOSE TO LIFE*, not an original Bergman script but co-written with Ulla Isaksson from her short story, in which the pains and ironies of a hospital childbirth ward were grimly and unblinkingly portrayed. Then came *THE FACE*, which seemed at first sight a trivial horror story with superimposed pretensions, *THE VIRGIN SPRING* (Isaksson again, but with touches of *THE SEVENTH SEAL*), and *THE DEVIL'S EYE* which was a complete surprise in 1960 although becoming slightly less elusive in the perspective offered by the trilogy. The films were melancholy, cynical, and beautifully constructed—one could say that for them. But they seemed perversely disparate, irritatingly so, as if in denial of the genius previously on display.

To contemplate VIRGIN SPRING today is to recall the shockwaves caused by its scenes of violence back in 1960 when the Swedish press conducted a debate involving film experts, lawyers, educators, poets, psychiatrists, and the local police chief, as to whether there was any artistic justification for such sequences (passed, however, without a cut by the Swedish censor). After a London Film Festival airing, the film was reduced by an abbreviation of the rape scene by the British censor, but the effect was not so much a reduction of one's horror at the event described, as a shift of emphasis. It appeared, in the cut version, that the murder of the young girl was the main responsibility of only one of her attackers (the tongueless herdsman) instead of all three as in the original script and the 13th century legend itself. Thus the father's vow to build a church in penance for his revenge is seemingly extended to include penance for the murder of two relatively innocent bystanders.

But in retrospect, this apportionment of blame seems less vital to an understanding of VIRGIN SPRING. As a characteristic illustration of the hypocrisy with which he appeared to suggest society regarded youth and beauty, the film echoes earlier Bergmans, and with its matter-of-fact approach to violence it certainly anticipates the later works. As in all his films, the question of guilt and responsibility is dominant. Although staged with deceptive simplicity in reconstruction of the original text, VIRGIN SPRING used the medieval conflict between the demands of Christianity and those of the traditional Norse gods to show a moral dilemma that is wholly contemporary—and indeed can be seen to continue in the wildly contrasting DEVIL'S EYE that followed.

Virginity is accepted in VIRGIN SPRING as the symbol of purity and goodness, and the destroyers of it are not just the physical embodiments of evil (and a medieval punishment for blasphemy was the removal of the offenders's tongue), but all who have sinned in any way. Thus Ingeri and her toad (signifying hatred, envy, and evil incarnate, it reappears immediately prior to the rape), is guilty of praying to Odin that the virgin's pride will suffer as badly as her own. The virgin's mother is guilty of loving her daughter more than her husband, who in turn is guilty of indulgence towards his daughter's laziness, while the girl herself is guilty of that very pride and that very laziness. The collection of lapses and indulgences makes logical both the tragedy and the miracle which follows. At a time when a sacrificer to Odin can still receive magical powers (through him we hear three dead men riding North), God seems justified in resorting to practical retribution for Christian infidelity. In this light, seen as a struggle between the animal and the intellect, with moral implications, VIRGIN SPRING leads directly to THE SILENCE.

Philip Strick

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY (Såsom i en Spegel)

(March 21)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1961.

Script: Ingmar Bergman.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Music: extract from Suite No. 2, in D minor, for cello, by J.S. Bach.

Leading Players: Harriet Andersson (*Karin*), Max von Sydow (*Martin*), Gunnar Björnstrand (*David*), Lars Passgård (*Minus*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 91 minutes.

The film is dedicated to Bergman's new wife, concert pianist Käbi Laretei, an honour which, in view of the narrative, she must have received with mixed feelings. Harriet Andersson, reappearing after a five year absence from Bergman's work, plays the impulsive, meditative young wife who finds that the mental illness from which she is recovering is in fact incurable. Her husband tries fumblingly to reassure her but, for all his protestations of love, has ceased to interest her. On the other hand, her father (the Björnstrand role) can still offer a comfortable familiarity at first but is soon revealed as a hauntingly detached observer—she's a case history for one of his novels. Between the two, on the bleak island where they have their holiday home, wanders her gawky teenage brother Minus in search of his own

personality. In one of the upstairs rooms (perhaps once that of her dead mother?) Karin finds the promise of a visit from God, which would give meaning to all things, but when the visitation at last comes it appears that God too is a bitter disappointment.

As the opening stage of Bergman's trilogy, THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY is like a précis for THE SILENCE in which the cerebral and the carnal, represented as two sides of a single personality through the two sisters, offer themselves as models for the future life of a young boy. The inadequate simplicity of the husband's embrace, as if by sheer passion he could summon his wife back to normality, is balanced by the despairing chill with which the father reveals that while an abortive suicide has enabled him to recognise the extent of his love for his family (and how frequently in Bergman's films have suicides been attempted and failed!), he is still incapable of demonstrating it to their benefit. He brings them pathetic presents, then poises himself for flight once more, pleading an overseas assignment that will take him safely out of reach of emotional commitment. For the boy, Latin textbooks and girlie magazines are mingled on the same table; he flicks through both sets of pages with the same eager anguish, poised for guidance about the direction in which life will require him to run (he spends much of the film darting about at high speed, but never leaves the island).

Set between one sunset and the next, the film gives its first and last images to the sea, from which the four laughing figures emerge at the start like characters all too unaware of the roles their creator has in mind for them. The almost placid context for their cathartic twenty-four hours seems to provide a formal reassurance by Bergman that despite all the evidence there is some kind of answer; father tells son that the knowledge of love's existence as something real is a good enough case for believing in God, and between their two heads the ocean beyond glows with affirmation. Karin, her perception shrouded behind dark glasses, has been lifted off into the sky (a worrying dissolve actually wipes her from the clouds), and her flight into madness can be dismissed as mere misfortune. The ocean, in its elemental wisdom, remains undisturbed.

But the Andersson performance has been too involving, and the concluding Björnstrand words are too unconvincing, for Bergman's message to be as placatory as his script. Neither the direct communication of sex nor the careful construction of the written page have been enough to cure Karin's mental instability. Unable to re-enter the innocence of her youth by embracing her brother, unable to find a satisfying purpose that will guide her through adulthood, her mind wanders in turmoil, and Bergman has no choice but to allow it full expression in his next film. The grim dialogues of WINTER LIGHT showed that THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY was an intended exorcism that failed, and that if Karin is insane she is just like the rest of us in a life encircled by oceanic silence.

Philip Strick

WINTER LIGHT (Nattvardsgästerna)

(March 21)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1962.

Script: Ingmar Bergman.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Leading Players: Gunnar Björnstrand (*Thomas Ericsson*), Ingrid Thulin (*Märta Lundberg*), Max von Sydow (*Jonas Persson*), Gunnel Lindblom (*Karen Persson*), Allan Edwall (*Algog Frövik*), Olof Thunberg (*Fredrik Blom*).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate A. 80 minutes.

"WINTER LIGHT opens with a service in which a priest celebrates communion with a congregation of nine (including the verger, there only to take the collection), of whom five are communicants. Only one of the nine (an elderly woman dressed in traditional rural style) appears to feel the service as an important experience; about one other (he turns out to be Algog Frövik, the crippled sexton) the film is at this stage non-committal. The remaining seven all display varying degrees of apathy or alienation: the old



gentleman who begins packing away his hymn book during the closing 'Amen' gives the impression of being there because that is what he has always done, part of a way of life; the mother with the bored little girl, who licks the back of the pew in front and then falls asleep, seems to treat the service as the 'done thing'; the verger is troubled by a cough in the middle of the singing, more from boredom than illness. Of those who are to prove major characters in the film, Märta Lundberg (Ingrid Thulin) seems overtly ironic and detached (although she leads the communicants to the altar, after an uneasy pause); Jonas Persson (Max von Sydow) appears preoccupied, and his wife (Gunnel Lindblom) seems quite unused to receiving. The organist yawns, and surreptitiously reads magazines.

"The first quarter of an hour of the film is an astonishing *tour-de-force* of exposition, with only one word (Mrs. Persson's 'Thanks', as Märta helps her to her feet—she is pregnant—after communion) beyond the text of the service, but all the main characters and central issues are firmly established. The whole development of the film is implicit in the first shot: in medium close-up the pastor, Thomas Eriksson (Gunnar Björnstrand), standing before the altar, his face and voice tense with reluctance and resentment, speaks the words describing the Last Supper. The sense of absurdity, of which he as well as the spectator is fully conscious, is strong throughout the scene: the spectacle of human beings performing a ritual which is meaningless to nearly all of them, including the pastor himself. . . .

"WINTER LIGHT is an intensely personal film. It is quite short (80 minutes), and covers a period of about four hours in the lives of a handful of characters living in a small and insignificant corner of rural Sweden. Yet, without ever violating strict narrative unity, without any suggestion that anything is being imposed on the characters and situations that doesn't grow naturally out of the dramatic data, the film epitomises perhaps the most essential inner movement of western civilization in the last hundred years: the movement away from religious orthodoxy, the discovery of God's 'silence' (or non-existence), the progression into a kind of tentative existentialism. We are far here from the grand but spurious gestures of THE SEVENTH SEAL: there is nothing picturesque, nothing inorganic, and nothing suspect about WINTER LIGHT. . . ."

Extracts from *Ingmar Bergman* by Robin Wood

THE SILENCE (Tystnaden)

(March 28)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.
Sweden, 1963.

Script: Ingmar Bergman.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Music: extract from J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

Leading Players: Ingrid Thulin (*Ester*), Gunnel Lindblom (*Anna*), Jörgen Lindström (*Johan*), Håkan Jahnberg (*Waiter*).

Black and white. English subtitles. 95 minutes. (Complete print, not certified).

"... THE SILENCE is a superbly controlled fable, and like all good fables, it communicates precise meanings on several planes beyond naturalism. 'The Silence' is the silence of God; it's role in the film is not to provide an enveloping romantic wasteland, against which the 'real thing'—involving human gestures of sex and humiliation—may take place. God's silence, and the consequences of His absence, infect every human act in Bergman's tale.

"The first thing we experience in the film is a magnified sound of ticking. After the credits, the first sequence—in the train compartment—places before us all the elements of the fable: Johan the boy, fragile reserved, overripe Anne perspiring profusely, Ester tense and sick, and a surrounding strangeness expressed in incomprehensible foreign notices and voices. Bergman draws us into his world with long uninterrupted takes and unforgettable images—sun setting behind a Max Ernst-like hill range, hard blurred shapes of tanks whipping past the windows. A calculated perfection of film elements is characteristic of Bergman's art; this sequence is one of his most astonishing achievements.

"The story of the film is by now familiar: Anna's revolt against Ester, her defiant love-making with a café barman, the worsening disease and increasing isolation of Ester, Johan's wandering through the hotel corridors, the strange old valet who helps and serves and is kind. With such a strong static situation the film becomes a deepening study of the relationships between these characters in their highly selective world. Within this rhythm of gradual revelation, the tiniest details reverberate with meaning...

"The first appearance of the old valet, for example, belongs on a naturalistic plane; but a combination of editing and the heightened quality of Håkan Jahnberg's performance makes his next intervention—soothing Ester after she has masturbated and thrashed about in helpless solitary fury—more than naturalistic. When the valet carries out the soiled and rumpled bed-clothes, the effect is already more resonant. We feel, like Ester, that this benign old man is forgiving her, taking away an old leaf, offering a temporary salvation. He is a father to her at this moment, perhaps something momentarily in the place of God. This impression can be carried through into his scenes with the boy. He makes kindly approaches to Johan, offers him food and a present of post-cards. The cards show his mother's funeral: he is bequeathing death to the boy, and the boy hides the cards under the carpet and doesn't respond to the old man. This relationship is vivid and profound, on both a naturalistic and an allegorical level.

"God—the real God—is nowhere else in this film. The closest we come to His presence is in Anna's speech describing her love-making in the dark corner of a church: the irony is astringent. God's role mingles imperceptibly with Father's: Anna complains that Ester's hold over her in the past was often due to a threat to reveal her escapades to Father, and the equation is made more explicit in one of the film's key scenes, when Ester confronts Anna and her foreign barman lover in their bed. 'I hate you because you make everything so important!' Anna cries, 'I'm fed up with your principles. When Father died, you said you didn't want to go on living. Why are you still living then?' Ester continues the moral judgment inherited from Father. Anna has rejected it, and follows only the impulses of her strong healthy body.

"But Father is dead, as Ester recalls on what she thinks is her own deathbed. She makes what she calls her 'confession before extreme unction.' Placing her hand on the valet's head, she puts her

fear and hate of sex, of 'male glands' and 'horrible forces', she wipes the sweat off her breasts and over her lips, and cries out her anguish, the division in her nature. Then, in one of the film's most humbling moments, Bergman shows us fear on the threshold of death. A sound like departing ships' sirens looms loud and Ester twists and gasps in a panic of suffocation. Terrified, she finally draws the sheet over her face, as if to get it all over with once and for all, to make a true winding-sheet at last. It is a naive and tremendous gesture, and it is witnessed by the old valet, who has just been identified as the owner of the watch whose constant ticking at the beginning and turning points of the film has been the only sound effect without a naturalistic basis. It is difficult not to believe that on this deeper, more intangible level, the old man is not meant to stand in place of God—a slightly absurd, fragile and temporary next-best..."

Michael Kustow/Sight and Sound (Summer 1964)

FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (Aus dem Leben der Marionetten)

(January 21-26)

Director: Ingmar Bergman.

West Germany, 1980.

Script: Ingmar Bergman.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Music: Rolf Wilhelm.

Leading players: Robert Atzorn (*Peter Egermann*), Christine Buchegger (*Katarina Egermann*), Martin Benrath (*Professor Mogens Jensen*), Rita Russek (*Katarina Krafft known as Ka*), Lola Müthel (*Cordelia Egermann*), Walter Schmidinger (*Tomas Isidor Mandelbaum, known as Tim*), Heinz Bennent (*Arthur Brenner*).

Eastman Colour. German dialogue/English subtitles. Certificate X. 104 minutes.

Peter Egermann, a young German business executive of impeccable background, visits the seedy premises where a prostitute, Katarina Krafft, entertains her customers. When the other guests have departed and the doorman, by arrangement, has locked them in, he becomes agitated, attacks the girl and strangles her. Later he phones his psychiatrist, summons him to the scene of the crime, and reports that he has had anal intercourse with the girl's corpse...

Bergman's case histories have seldom been inclined to avert their gaze from horrific truths, but it seems a particular irony that while the violence of *VIRGIN SPRING* and the sexuality of *THE SILENCE* hit the headlines when the films

first appeared, scarcely an eyebrow seems to have been raised over the perversely forthright truths of *MARIONETTES*. The environment which, twenty years ago, the Censor would have wished to excise from its inhabitants, has now become so familiar, its accusing stare so habitual (like that of the unavoidable suicide in *SERPENT'S EGG*) that Bergman's fundamentalist view of human nature seems to have become cancerous reality, monstrously outgrowing any of the more modest extremes he has considered in the past. Today he observes a world in which he can safely assume we all share, with muted, dry-eyed repulsion.

Expatriate during the filming of *MARIONETTES*, Bergman nevertheless flourishes an unmistakable autograph. His passionate misanthropy travels with him like a suitcase, and Munich or any other port of call in this world features the same bleak, airless rooms where the dusk of marital breakdown hangs heavy with monologue. *MARIONETTES* is starkly and scantily furnished; where decor is required, it appears without fuss or clutter, appropriate but unobtrusive—a blandly modern apartment, a portentous corporation office, a chintzy bachelor den, a tattily vulgar seduction parlour. Brief glimpses of the angular geometry of motorways and office-blocks provide occasional punctuation points. But the film's main landscapes are facial, confiding in us—or in mirrors, which are much the same thing—against simple backgrounds of walls and shadows.

And the faces pour out a familiar litany of disgust and terror, recounting stories of degradation, weakness and contempt. Suspended before us, Bergman's marionettes kick and struggle in their terminal ballet, a puppet theatre reflecting all the pathetic absurdity of the contemporary experience. It would be an intolerable encounter if Bergman were not, as ever, such a dazzling showman, or if his cast, as ever, did not seem to have been plucked from some secret international confederacy of blazing talent. The language is German, but the vocabulary is unmistakably Bergman, and his new players possess to such an extent the haunted vulnerability of their earlier Swedish counterparts that one can't help greeting them as old acquaintances—the anguished doubter, the dry inquisitor, the squabbling husband-and-wife team, the ingratiating parent, the matter-of-fact seductress. Here a touch of Von Sydow, there some of the old Björnstrand chill, even (in Walter Schmidinger) some resemblances to Bergman himself. Nykvist's camera, like a needle, transfixes them all, yet their performances never waver.

If the film were nothing else, it is a triumph of soliloquy; but of course there's more to its fascination than this. Its construction is a special intrigue, the narrative switching back and forth in time around the climactic killing to demonstrate that the old rules of chronological sequence need



never be heeded again. Instead, each switch in time contributes to an underlying linear development that reaches its logical destination in the film's closing shot (unexpected as it at first seems) and completes one of the most detailed portraits in all Bergman's work. The killer/victim may not be so far removed from the sufferer in *HOUR OF THE WOLF* who also had his lethally erotic fantasies, but we are certainly able to understand him more thoroughly (the scene in which he dictates an intricate business memo is worth a film in itself). And like the earlier paranoid, he proves ultimately to have been a piece on somebody else's chessboard—an obstacle to the psychiatrist who desires his wife, a possible conquest for the homosexual who plots to destroy his marriage, a status-symbol for the mother who claims to have sacrificed her career to raise him, an enigmatic failure for the wife who had hoped for consummation and children.

Even when, in accordance with the specialist's somewhat dubious conclusion that one can only be master of a person one has killed, he achieves the sexuality he has been incapable of before (his wife has described this for us in painful detail), he is no more than following a behavioural inevitability. Like a child, he is shaped and directed by his environment; at the end, he is raw material once again. His brief lifespan is presented in colour—the rest, marvellously, is in monochrome. It's Bergman's answer, take it how you will, to Egermann's demand: "Am I alive or was the dream, in the shape it took, my own brief moment of life, of experienced reality?" For the audience, naturally, the dream has been as real as its context, Katarina's 'death' with its horrific glimpse of flowing blood seeming far more explicit than the prostitute's 'genuine' off-screen fate. As he did with *PERSONA*, Bergman illustrates how, in the midst of all today's obscenities, our heads provide all the phantoms we really need to fear, as influential a part of our environment as any exterior images.

The images in *MARIONETTES*, unfortunately for our own peace of mind, are searingly vivid—a smiling girl with a razor at her throat, a man poised to leap from a building in the grey light of dawn, two naked figures on a blinding expanse of white, a plump disco dancer offering with magnificent boredom an unappetising spread of flesh. Whether or not he has anything fresh to say (and his view of the world as "a sort of pulp composed of blood and nerves" seems as quintessential as the ticking clocks on the soundtrack), Bergman brings a hypnotic freshness to his manner of saying it.

Philip Strick



appetisingly, Neil Diamond was in the spotlight, while for those who prefer more elusive forms of cinema Jon Jost's *LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE* tackled something of the same subject.

And it's not that Sidney Pollack and Jerry Schatzberg are an unlikely team. Both *ELECTRIC HORSEMAN* (Pollack) and *SWEET REVENGE* (Schatzberg) were disenchanted meditations on the faded, jaded American Dream. Pollack's film had the greater success, of course; Robert Redford in light-bulbs discarding breakfast-cereal fame for the untouched outdoors trailed both charisma and Jane Fonda, whereas Schatzberg's work (originally titled, with scathing irony, *DANDY THE ALL-AMERICAN GIRL*) starred Elizabeth Taylor's precociously talented but so far unhailed daughter Stockard Channing as a kookie car-stealer, and largely evaded attention. But both films had warmly anti-heroic central characters, breaking the rules more for the sake of what used to be than for what might come next, and *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE* continues the thread of the argument. The new ingredient, surprisingly enough in this era of cinematic anonymity, is the battered, greying figure who has shambled casually from his supporting role in *ELECTRIC HORSEMAN* (where he also dominated the soundtrack) to achieve the status of potential superstar. From now on, there will be Willie Nelson movies.

Country music has yielded a modest harvest of screen talent over the years. Long ago it was Gene Autry and Tex Ritter, although the *real* music man of the singing cowboy era, Bob Wills, didn't exactly shine in dramatic roles. More recently, Kris Kristofferson and the outstanding Dolly Parton have notably succeeded in switching from stetson glitter to celluloid perpetuity. The surprise in Willie Nelson's case is that it has taken so long for the big screen to notice him—but then most things seem to have taken their time in Willie's life. His career dates way back to 1943 when, at the age of ten, self-taught on the guitar, he got his first paying job with a Texas dance band. Innumerable employments later, he was in Nashville at the end of the 1950s selling unconventional songs which, when sung by other people, tended to be hits.

Willie's own singing style, while generally regarded as peculiar (one of his albums, with evidently desperate accuracy on the part of the record company, is called 'My Own Peculiar Way'), combined sophisticated phrasing with just enough rustic anguish to render him tolerable to audiences at the Grand Ole Opry, the Café Royal of country music. Photos of him on the Opry stage in the 1960s would be unrecognisable to his fans of today; a chubby, cleancut face above a natty Madison Avenue suit contrives to combine Bill Haley with Orson Welles. It's an unsettling mixture, just like his recordings of the period; moody and unpredictable, the Nelson sound was an awkward truce between Nashville gloss and a gritty, patriarchal fatalism. It explains why, although he has sung much the same songs (his own, mostly) for at least twenty years, it has taken a good decade for his audience to catch up with him.

On screen, he carries all those years, and some other centuries too, in a corrugated face with fathomless eyes on a slow burn through his skull. His choice in clothes—unmatchingly draped on him as if snatched blindly from a charity stall—has the lurid inelegance of ironic disdain, and his voice has the rasp of a serene anguish. His band and bodyguards, all there in the film with him, hover around in black leather like Hell's Angels rejects. They look, the lot of them, like the imminent destruction of Mom's Apple Pie, and Willie has as much the appearance of a star as a bicycle shed. But he is effortlessly the focal point of the music, the narrative, and the film. Singing or acting, when Nelson performs there's nowhere else you want to look.

Country music fans, not all of whom approve of Willie by any means, will nevertheless spend much of *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE* puzzling out the seeming irrelevance of the title (in keeping with the hit song, the film begs to be called 'On the Road Again') and picking out the hidden celebrities. Willie's sister, Bobbie, who plays piano in his band and was responsible for his musical education many years back, works hard as usual to avoid being noticed, although it makes a nice touch that whenever the star is making a fool of himself with the wet-behind-the-ears kid who has thrown herself at him on a plate there's a close-up of elder sister Bobbie looking more than habitually solemn. On the other hand, there's no missing Emmylou Harris, one of the most beautiful things ever to happen to country music, who must surely soon follow Dolly Parton to knock Hollywood sideways.

There's also one of the best fiddle-players in the world, Johnny Gimble, and one of the best guitar-pickers, Grady Martin (he of the celebrated acoustic work on the unavoidable Marty Robbins hit 'El Paso'). An extra bonus is the legendary Kenneth Threadgill, the silver-haired yodelling guru behind the whole Texas chapter in country music history. Without Threadgill, not that he'd admit it, there'd have been nowhere for Willie (or Waylon or many another self-styled outlaw) to run to when he gave up Nashville for wider horizons.

Setting aside the music, and there's plenty of it, Schatzberg's film offers not only the special pleasure of Robby Müller's photography—a traveller's-eye-view of the States by Wim Wenders' cameraman that once more rescues the landscape from looking like a backdrop for some interminable television series—but also the neat editing job by Aram Avakian and his team. Someday, perhaps they'll let Avakian make another film of his own. And there are completely winning performances by Dyan Cannon (spectacularly suitable in masses of hair; her singing voice isn't bad, either), Amy Irving (just right as the edgy, star-struck, guilt-ridden seductress), and Slim Pickens (in cheering form as the outraged parent who turns out to prefer a good friend to an intransigent daughter). They provide a plausible and appealing background for Nelson's own peculiar world—but don't be persuaded that *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE* is a typical country music show. Willie Nelson has never been typical of anything.

Philip Strick

HONEYSUCKLE ROSE

(January 14—19)

Director: Jerry Schatzberg.

U.S.A., 1980.

Script: Carol Sobieski, William D. Wittliff, John Binder. Based on the story by Gosta Steven, Gustav Holander.

Photography: Robby Müller.

Music/songs: Willie Nelson, Hank Cochran, Johnny Gimble, Kenneth Threadgill, Chuck Joyce, Julie Paul, Kris Kristofferson, Rodney Crowell, Lee Clayton, Leon Russell, Mickey Rooney Jr., performed by Willie Nelson and Family.

Leading Players: Willie Nelson (*Buck Bonham*), Dyan Cannon (*Viv Bonham*), Amy Irving (*Lily Ramsey*), Slim Pickens (*Garland Ramsey*), Joey Floyd (*Jamie Bonham*), Charles Levin (*Sid*), Priscilla Pointer (*Rosella Ramsey*).

Technicolor/Scope. Certificate A. 119 minutes.

With *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE*, a new kind of film comes into being. It's not that the story hasn't been told before—on the contrary, the account of a roaming, restless singer finding fame and fortune with a girl on the road and a wife waiting at home has been with us for years, both for real and for the screen. Most recently, and not too

NICHOLAS RAY



NICHOLAS RAY

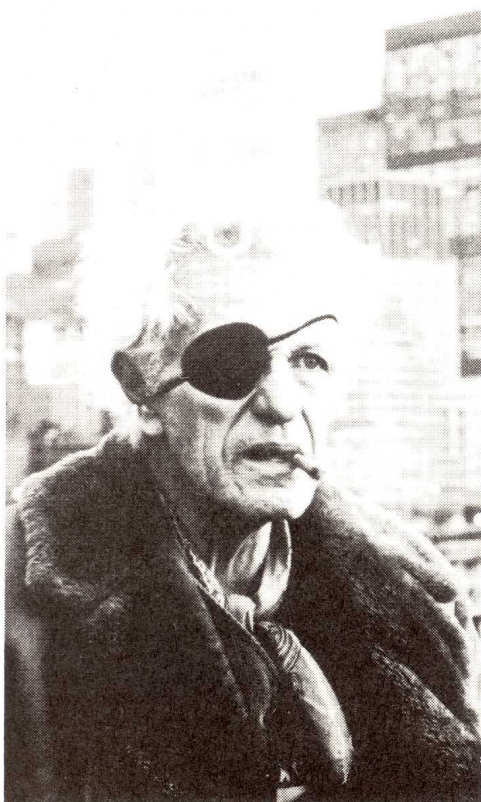
Nicholas Ray worked in nearly all the genres of Hollywood melodrama. He directed Westerns (JOHNNY GUITAR, THE JAMES BROTHERS), crime movies (PARTY GIRL, ON DANGEROUS GROUND), 'problem' pictures (KNOCK ON ANY DOOR, BIGGER THAN LIFE, REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE), war films (BITTER VICTORY), action romances (THEY LIVE BY NIGHT, IN A LONELY PLACE) and action adventures (THE LUSTY MEN, WIND ACROSS THE EVERGLADES, THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS). But most of the films are poised at odd angles to the conventions of their genres. Many of them involve a love story that breaks out from its marginal function as 'romantic interest' to occupy or contest the centre of the drama. On the other hand, THEY LIVE BY NIGHT and IN A LONELY PLACE, which I've categorised as romances, are tales as much of violence, suspicion and betrayal as of love. The freshness of Ray's approach to familiar Hollywood prescriptions is reflected in plots that find their heroes from among the fringe characters of their genres: the vicious hoodlum-cop (ON DANGEROUS GROUND), the bent lawyer who acts as 'mouthpiece for the Mob' (PARTY GIRL), the bruised and tarnished saloon woman (in JOHNNY GUITAR, which is only nominally centred on its eponymous gunslinger). The impulse to re-structure and destabilise generic material is most clear in THE LUSTY MEN, which I take to be Ray's finest achievement. It is a rodeo picture which uses elements of the standard narrative pattern for sports/show-biz and other success stories: talented

newcomer rises from obscurity to fame and riches with support from his wife and professional assistance from an old-timer/egomania threatens to destroy his personal life/humility and equilibrium are regained through (often narrowly averted) disaster caused by his insensitivity or ingratitude. This story is to be found within Ray's film; it is the story of the character played by Arthur Kennedy. But the movie's stars are Susan Hayward and Robert Mitchum. Their roles as wife and mentor to Kennedy are built up so as to displace the success story and absorb it into an intricately worked triangle whose apex is given to Mitchum's ex-star struggling *without* success to accept or assuage the pain of his position as has-been hanger-on at the scene of his former triumphs.

Ray's re-alignment of familiar generic patterns is the sign and the product of the precedence that he gave to character and theme at the expense of plot. The thematic core of a Ray movie is generated by the conflicts *within* his characters. External action, the conflict and negotiation between characters, is the projection of internal conflict. There is a perceptible effort to give each actor a full and complex interior life, to release performance from servitude to the requirements of narrative exposition or development. The rewards of this approach are an extraordinary richness and density of texture that give each scene an intensity and an import often far beyond what's needed to keep the plot moving. The transactions between Ray's characters are alive with a sub-text of unspoken intentions, needs, hopes and apprehensions. The task thus given to the actor is both to expose underlying motives and responses and to make clear the extent to which they are acknowledged, concealed or ignored by the character. The evidence from the screen is that Ray worked to provoke and challenge his actors, to draw them out of the security of routine, rather than to promote relaxation and reassurance. Often they are disposed in space in ways that obstruct, and thus give greater urgency to, their communications. There were actors who would or could not be persuaded to put themselves at risk. (My praise for the unusual energy displayed by Charlton Heston in 55 DAYS AT PEKING was met with wry exasperation: 'If only he would have taken his hands out of his pockets . . .') But it is to their glory, as much as it is witness to Ray's acumen in casting, that so many actors did rise to his challenges. I don't think that Bogart, Mitchum, Cagney, James Mason, Richard Burton, James Dean, Robert Ryan, Joan Crawford or Lee J. Cobb were ever better (more adventurous or more successful) than in the films they made with Ray. And I don't know of any films in which Susan Hayward and Robert Taylor approached the force and penetration that they show in THE LUSTY MEN and PARTY GIRL.

The vitality of characterisation in Ray's pictures is more than the product of his work on script and performance. His visual style constantly reaches for images and rhythms to heighten and illuminate the significance of the actor's moment. The selection and design of settings makes the decor an active witness to the drama as well as its crucial context. In his use of colour, composition and cutting, in his choreography of the film's movement, Ray showed the same boldness that he asked of his actors. The quest for eloquence and authenticity was always urgent, sometimes at the edge of desperation. It could not be uniformly successful, but it was almost never dull. The rewards of Ray's movies (which I have not exhausted in twenty years of regular viewing) are probably reserved for audiences ready to enjoy following him over the top. His films are about pain, failure, confusion and betrayal. It was his talent (if you like mild words) that made them exhilarating.

Victor Perkins



This season consists of a selection of Nicholas Ray's films as a director. For the record, it should be noted that his other credits include: *A WOMAN'S SECRET* (1948), *KNOCK ON ANY DOOR* (1948), *BORN TO BE BAD* (1950), *FLYING LEATHERNECKS* (1951), *JOHNNY GUITAR* (1953), *RUN FOR COVER* (1954), *HOT BLOOD* (1955), *55 DAYS AT PEKING* (1963), *WE CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN* (1973), *WET DREAMS* (1974) (one episode). Ray died on June 16, 1979.

LECTURE/DISCUSSION

Victor Perkins, who selected the films in this season, will discuss Nicholas Ray's work in the cinema on Wednesday March 24 at 7.00 p.m., before our screening of the complete version of *THE LUSTY MEN*. Admission to the lecture will be free. (Victor Perkins is Head of the Film Studies Department of the University of Warwick, co-editor of *Movie*, and author of *Film as Film*.)



THEY LIVE BY NIGHT

(January 20)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1947.
Script: Charles Schnee, based on the novel *Thieves Like Us* by Edward Anderson.
Photography: George E. Diskant.
Leading Players: Farley Granger (*Bowie*), Cath O'Donnell (*Keechie*), Howard da Silva (*Chicamaw*), Jay C. Flippen (*T-Dub*).
Black and white. Certificate A. 96 minutes.

Ray's first film is astonishing for the boldness and assurance with which it presents the clash between romantic aspiration and corrupted circumstance. It was derived from Edward Anderson's novel *Thieves Like Us* which in turn drew on the lives and legend of Bonnie (Parker) and Clyde (Barrow). Updated from the depression era to the contemporary '40s, it pictured a society of absurd and desperate avarice where the quest for individual security endlessly reproduces destruction and betrayal. A collision of styles enforces the sense that tenderness and sensitivity can seek a space only in the threatened margins of this world.

The romantic scenes are abstracted from time and space as if the surrounding world can provide no location for their intimations of joy and sensuality. That world, in its harsh contingency, is presented in restless, undirected movement—a continuous agitation whose main and recurrent consequence is a litter of broken undertakings, smashed objects and fractured lives. The motif of the watch (the gift which stands in for an engagement ring, the token of fugitive time as the token of commitment) articulates the relations between these worlds. Keeping them apart is only a dream. There is pity, outrage and grim humour in Ray's portrait of a society that can corrupt or crush but neither accommodate nor ignore his outlaw lovers.

Victor Perkins



IN A LONELY PLACE

(February 10)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1949.
Script: Andrew Solt, from the novel by Dorothy B. Hughes, adapted by Edmund H. North.
Photography: Burnett Guffey.
Leading Players: Humphrey Bogart (*Dixon Steel*), Gloria Grahame (*Laurel Gray*), Frank Lovejoy (*Brub Nicolai*), Carl Benton Reid (*Capt. Lockner*).
Black and white. Certificate A. 93 minutes. 16 mm.

IN A LONELY PLACE was the second film Ray directed for Humphrey Bogart's Santana production company. The first was *KNOCK ON ANY DOOR* (1949), the huge success of which took Ray into the big time and enabled him to go freelance after the expiry of his R.K.O. contract. (He was 'on loan' for the Bogart movies.) Billy Wilder, in caustic reaction to his own experience with Bogart on *SABRINA FAIR*, suggested that the star preferred to employ young directors like Ray and Richard Brooks because they wouldn't have the confidence or the clout to oppose his whims. More generous interpretations are equally plausible, and the evidence on the screen is of a very successful collaboration that extends Bogart's range without diminishing his force.

Most remarkably, the film inflects Bogart's 'tough-guy' persona in a way that is recognisably Ray's, emphasising inwardness, solitude and vulnerability, and making violence the index of the character's weakness rather than strength. Bogart plays a semi-successful Hollywood screenwriter torn between his contempt for the modes and values of the film industry and his need to shore up a very insecure self-image by achieving success in the terms which that society recognises. His own conflicts make him sensitive to any real or imagined affront, so that he lashes out with crazy savagery in the face of threat. Under (groundless) suspicion of murder, he enters on a romance with the neighbour who provides his alibi (Gloria Grahame). But both partners stake too much on love's power to dissolve individual tensions and the affair disintegrates under the strain of accumulating suspicion and recrimination. It's a very unusual love story and a mordant rebuff to Hollywood's (and Ray's?) desire to believe in romance as a solution—rather than a combination—of lovers' problems. With a typically open ending that leaves the characters more or less where we found them at the start, the film is almost an enactment of one of the most heretical statements from *THE LUSTY MEN*: "Marriage is lonely, but it ain't private."

Despite a construction that is at some points rather forced, *IN A LONELY PLACE* could be a textbook of directorial skills, particularly in the control over performance and decor. The casting, too, has many points of interest. Ray pushed

through the selection of Gloria Grahame (against Columbia's preference for Ginger Rogers), although their brief marriage had already fallen apart. He chose Frank Lovejoy for the role of Bogart's detective friend because he found the actor "sentimental about himself" and thus well suited for casting as an ambitious mediocrity who can bring himself to betray friendship in the pursuit of duty so long as he can feel good about feeling bad. As Bogart's agent Art Smith, shortly before he fell victim to the blacklist, offered a wry and touching portrait of a friendship which, unlike the lovers' love, is without conditions or reservations.

Victor Perkins

ON DANGEROUS GROUND

(January 20)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1950.
Script: A.I. Bezzerides.
Photography: George E. Diskant.
Music: Bernard Herrmann.
Leading Players: Ida Lupino (*Mary Walden*), Robert Ryan (*Jim Wilson*), Ward Bond (*Walter Brent*), Charles Kemper (*Bill Daly*), Ed Begley (*Capt. Brawley*).
Black and white. Certificate A. 80 minutes.

"ON DANGEROUS GROUND was an absolute failure but I'm still fond of it in some ways... I like the story of a man whose job is that of a member of a violence squad to apprehend or to prevent violence if he can, and yet has that same violence within him..." Ray's own comment (from an interview in *Movie* No. 9) is indicative of the film's ambitions, less than generous to its achievement. It *does* fail, lapsing into



sentimentality in its effort to resolve its themes, partly because Ida Lupino's role is given force rather than definition. But much of the film, and the whole of Robert Ryan's performance, is of a searching intensity, and exciting as well as unnerving in its energy. Part of what attracted Ray to the subject was exactly what would have deterred many another director—the 'broken' construction which first inspects the hero on his home ground in a city of brutal night then, a third of the way through the picture, transfers him to the desolate snowscapes of an isolated rural community to begin a new story. Ray does not evade or soften the transition, but extends it in a sequence of worried and wondering lyricism. The unifying structure is derived from theme rather than plot. The transitional imagery enforces the sense that, when sent to 'Siberia' to cool off, Ryan's hyper-sensitive, well-intentioned and neurotically vicious cop is not escaping from his problems but carrying them with him. Once away from it all, he has to negotiate between three characters each of whom reflects an aspect of his own conflicted drives, anxieties and aspirations. Ward Bond's eye-for-an-eye redneck is propelled by vigilante fervour rather than grief in his quest for his daughter's killer; attempting to thwart him, Jim Wilson (Ryan) is ironically poised against the same shoot-first determination to destroy the agents of destruction that has been his own habit and pretext. The killer, Danny Walden, faces him both with what is immature and compulsive in his violence and with a sensitivity similarly turned inwards to yield only pain and isolation. Danny's blind sister, Mary (Ida Lupino), mirrors Wilson's loneliness and his pursuit of duty as a distraction from his own urgent need, but also indicates the healing potential of a frank recognition of dependence.

Visual motifs of tracking and hunting, as well as a sustained imagery of hands (that reach to contact or to crush, to inflict or defuse violence) are devices that help to unify the film across the ruptures of its narrative.

Aspects of *ON DANGEROUS GROUND* appear to have influenced *PSYCHO*. It's very likely that the composer, Bernard Herrmann, would have wanted Hitchcock to see Ray's picture since *ON DANGEROUS GROUND* benefits hugely from a score as fine as Herrmann every wrote, therefore one of the best of all movie scores.

Victor Perkins

THE LUSTY MEN

(March 24)

Director: Nicholas Ray.

U.S.A., 1952.

Script: Horace McCoy and Davd Dortort.

Photography: Lee Garmes.

Music: Roy Webb.

Leading Players: Robert Mitchum (*Jeff*), Susan Hayward (*Louise*), Arthur Kennedy (*Wes*), Arthur Hunnicutt (*Booker Davis*), Frank Faylen (*Al Dawson*).

Black and white. Certificate U. 113 minutes.

Any presentation of *THE LUSTY MEN* is, as far as I'm concerned, a major event. But the Arts Lab's presentation is especially notable because it will be the first time the complete movie has been offered to a British audience. Before now it has always been shown in a version cut down from 113 to 96 minutes. Even in that truncated form it has always seemed a masterpiece to me, but the full picture has, as you'd expect, a clearer articulation of motive and viewpoint.

One can understand, if not condone, the cuts for European distribution because the film is organised around character rather than plot so that it seems rather ramblingly constructed. (Perhaps it is, but that's not indisputably a defect.) As often, Ray was working from an incomplete script that was in process of development with the actors and writers as shooting progressed; the production had to start before the screenplay was defined on account of Susan Hayward's commitments. The direction of the narrative was thus determined in part by the actors' discoveries and inventions in the realm of character. The studio (which often balked at Ray's determination to treat the screenplay as only a loose draft for the film) had to accept a working method which came naturally to a director committed to exploration and improvisation.



The title is about the only thing I can fault in this film (barring a brief and immediately reclaimed concession to Hollywood optimism in the last few minutes). 'The Lusty Men' suggests none of the irony, outrage or compassion with which the film dissects the American cult of competitive masculinity. The rodeo background allows Ray to explore the virility creed through which the male characters seek their definition and find their destruction. Against this self-deluding romanticism he sets a remarkably clear-sighted and determined woman who knows what she wants, and how much less she can realistically hope to get, and who will not concede her own claims in order to spectate on an endless and doomed re-cycling of male vanity. It is only an indication of the film's freshness of viewpoint that it offers for our sympathy and appreciation a woman who controls her emotions in order to pursue the least unsatisfactory deal available within her (drastically limited) options. In the movies, such women are customarily presented as unnatural, scheming, and headed for disaster.

Victor Perkins

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

(February 10)

Director: Nicholas Ray.

U.S.A., 1955.

Script: Stewart Stern, adapted by Irving Shulman from *The Blind Run* by Nicholas Ray.

Photography: Ernest Haller.

Music: Leonard Rosenman.

Leading players: James Dean (*Jim Stark*), Natalie Wood (*Judy*), Jim Backus (*Jim's Father*), Sal Mineo (*Plato*), Dennis Hopper (*Goon*).

Warnercolour/Scope. Certificate A. 111 minutes.

Perhaps Ray's most famous film, *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE* stars James Dean, Natalie Wood and Sal Mineo as three lonely, insecure teenagers adrift in an apparently uncaring



world. In an interview in *Movie* (No. 9, 1963), Ray said of the film:

"REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE was the most completely satisfying film for me and I think will hold up as a document as well as a piece of entertainment for quite a long time. One motif in it was not clear, where it could have been clearer: I took some understanding for granted. I think I should have considered the proportion of young people involved in this kind of activity in the United States. I could have added some footage to say that there was only a small percentage who engaged in this activity. But once again I don't think the externals are terribly important.

"I think the ending, or just before the ending, between the parents and the boy and the girl, should have been a little less sentimental. I think that in retrospect I did overcaricature the father, but that seemed necessary at the time from the prejudiced point of view of the boy; this was the way his father looked to him . . .

"I began shooting REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE in black and white and then changed to colour. I have my own ideas about the psychological values of colour. There's no really authoritative piece of literature on it. I do feel that not only story points can be made but emphasis can be put on scenes where you want emphasis to be put on them. In REBEL Natalie and Jim kneel over Sal and notice for the first time that he has one red sock and one blue sock on: that helps in the most external way to say to the audience quickly that he's had a pretty confused day, he woke up confused".

BIGGER THAN LIFE

(February 24)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1956.

Script: Cyril Hume and Richard Maibaum.

Photography: Joe MacDonald.

Music: David Raskin.

Producer: James Mason.

Leading Players: James Mason (*Ed Avery*), Barbara Rush (*Lou*), Walter Matthau (*Wally*).

Cinemascope and Deluxe colour. Certificate X. 95 minutes.

In an interview in *Movie* (No. 9, May, 1963) Nicholas Ray said of BIGGER THAN LIFE: "The film was not a story about cortisone, any miracle drug. It was a story about a man, or any man, who relies on a miracle of any sort, whether drugs, or the temporary relief of alcohol, or an act of faith, or the money from a rich uncle's will, or the sudden insight from an analyst's couch, no matter what it is, the winning of a law suit or the sermon from the pulpit. There are no easy answers, no answers that do not involve the responsibility of a man to act on those answers in relation to his family and the societies around him. By mentioning a specific name of a specific drug which had side effects during its early administration much more terrifying than those depicted on the screen, I was in error. The portrayal of the effects was toned down considerably from the material at hand . . . The film had nothing at all to do with an attack on the drug industry. It had only to do with man's responsibility. The setting of the film interested me because it was a part of middle-class America where a teacher (James Mason) who gets a very average kind of income had to, with his responsibilities, take an added job besides guiding the development and the intelligence of the young people. He had to work as a taxi-cab driver to supplement his income. This man should be able to support his wife and family and have enough money for meeting emergencies, to give him time to prepare with imagination the tremendous task he has of helping to form the character, minds and curiosities of the children whom he is teaching. That is his major social responsibility.

"The whole social-psychological-moral aspect of the story was of interest to me, and I feel that it's a film that has been misunderstood.

"The drug helped him escape from the realities of his everyday living into a world of hallucination, which made him feel grand and above everything, above the economic need of his family and the mundane facts of life. This in turn made it necessary, convenient, attractive to him to take another pill every time he felt low or felt he was descending to reality. By taking more pills he got into greater depression, because everything



James Mason in 'Bigger Than Life'

compensates in that way. So here's an internal pressure and a lack of moral stability to be able to cope, function and assume responsibility."

Supporting film: THE JAMES BROTHERS. Dir.: Nicholas Ray. U.S.A., 1956. Leading players: Robert Wagner, Jeffrey Hunter, Hope Lange, Agnes Moorehead. Colour/Scope. Cert. U. 92 mins.

BITTER VICTORY

(March 14)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1957.

Script: René Hardy, Nicholas Ray, Gavin Lambert & Additional dialogue by Paul Gallico and Raymond Queneau.

Photography: Michel Kelber.

Music: Maurice Le Roux.

Leading Players: Richard Burton (*Capt. Leith*), Curd Jurgens (*Major Brand*), Ruth Romas (*Jane Brand*).

Black and white/Scope. Certificate A. 90 minutes (British release print).

Jean-Luc Godard placed Nicholas Ray's BITTER VICTORY at the head of his choice of the ten best films of 1957. In *Godard on Godard* (Secker & Warburg, 1972), his review of the film was reprinted:

"BITTER VICTORY is an abnormal film. One is no longer interested in objects, but in what lies between the objects and which becomes an object in its turn. Nicholas Ray forces us to consider as real something one did not even consider as unreal, something one did not consider at all. BITTER VICTORY is rather like one of those drawings in which children are asked to find the hunter and which at first seem to be a meaningless mass of lines.

"Not that one should say 'behind the British Commando raid on Rommel's HQ lies a symbol of our time', because there is no behind and no before. BITTER VICTORY is what it is. One does not find reality on the one hand—the conflict between Lieutenant Keith and Captain Brand—and fiction on the other—the conflict between courage and cowardice, fear and lucidity, morality and liberty, or what-have-you. No. It is a question of something quite different. What? The stars, maybe, and men who like to look at them and dream....

"Never before have the characters in a film seemed so close and yet so far away. Faced by the deserted streets of Benghazi or the sand-dunes, we suddenly think for the space of a second of something else—the snack-bars on the Champs-Élysées, a girl one liked, everything, and anything, lies, the treachery of women, the shallowness of men, playing the slot-machines. For BITTER VICTORY is not a reflection of life, it is life itself turned into film, seen from behind the mirror

where the cinema intercepts it. It is at once the most direct and the most secret of films, the most subtle and the crudest. It is not cinema, it is more than cinema".

Supporting film: WIND ACROSS THE EVERGLADES. Dir.: Nicholas Ray, U.S.A., 1958. Leading Players: Burl Ives, Christopher Plummer, Gypsy Rose Lee. Colour. Cert. A. 84 mins. (U.K. version).

PARTY GIRL

(14 February)

Director: Nicholas Ray.
U.S.A., 1958.

Script: George Wells, from a story by Leo Katcher.

Photography: Robert Bronner.

Music: Jeff Alexander and Nicholas Brodsky. Songs by Sammy Cahn.

Choreography: Robert Sidney.

Leading Players: Robert Taylor (*Thomas Farrell*), Cyd Charisse (*Vicki Gaye*), Lee J. Cobb (*Rico Angelo*), John Ireland (*Louis Canetto*).

Cinemascope and Metrocolor. Certificate A. 98 minutes. 16 mm. print.

PARTY GIRL is a fascinating test case for the director's power to enrich rather ordinary materials through the exercise of his craft. It was a package put together at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a vehicle for two end-of-contract stars (Robert Taylor and Cyd Charisse) and in the evident hope of duplicating the success of LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME: there, three years previously, Joe Pasternak had combined Doris Day, James Cagney, showbiz and the Prohibition racketeers. Here the same producer offered a variant (more crime, less music) in which Robert Taylor as a crippled and crooked lawyer and Cyd Charisse as a dancer/callgirl form a liaison that threatens the lawyer's established allegiance to gangland king Rico (Lee J. Cobb).

Ray was drawn to the project because he'd had close experience of its milieu ('20s Chicago), because it was the nearest thing to a musical he'd ever been offered and, one guesses, because the confrontation between dancer and cripple held the promise of visual and dramatic extremity. In the event, he was not able to direct the development of the screenplay to his own satisfaction. The unsolved problem of the narrative is that the relationship between Taylor and Charisse achieves stability half-way through the film; thereafter the heroine has no dramatic function other than to act as pawn in the transactions between Taylor and Cobb. This decline is the more noticeable because the relationship begins as such a vivid negotiation of mutual fears, resentments and appeals. The gap is filled with

large (but inevitably partial) success by transferring interest to Cobb's reaction to betrayal, and Taylor's attempts to deal with it.

Ray does, I think, everything that could be done (and much more than most directors could imagine) to disguise and redeem the script's weaknesses and to develop its potential. Time and again, in performance, his camera is able to chart treacherously shifting relationships with a complexity vastly in excess of what is offered by the dialogue. Taylor's performance rises far above the considered competence that was his norm. Cobb's bravura is alternately controlled and unleashed so that his Rico offers a beguiling and unsettling compound of grotesque comedy, terror and pathos. (It's a pity the film has to pretend that his betrayal and death at Taylor's hands is a 'happy ending' since that blunts the impact of Ray's moral preference for the gangster over the forces of law and order). The background is studded with wonderful gargoyles of ineptitude, grossness, hypocrisy and a weird innocence.

Then again (though it is not readily apparent in any print of the film now available in Britain), the film achieves bold and telling qualities of design that greatly expand the screenplay's power. Ray was able to push through an exploration of dramatic colour that gave expressiveness priority over 'good taste'. The result was garishly beautiful. In the design of sets and props the dominant theme is of disguise. Everything is feverishly dressed up (payment for prostitution is conveyed inside glittering powder compacts; tissue and tinsel are pulled away from a gift-wrapped phial of vitriol) as if this world can neither confront nor conceal the knowledge of its own corruption.

Victor Perkins

THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS

(March 7)

Director: Nicholas Ray.

U.S.A., 1959-60.

Script: Nicholas Ray.

Photography: Aldo Tonti and Peter Hennessy.

Music: Angelo F. Levagnino.

Leading Players: Anthony Quinn (*Inuk*), Yoko Tani (*Asiak*), Peter O'Toole (uncredited and dubbed) (*Ins. Trooper*).

Technicolour. Certificate A. 107 mins.

The following is extracted from an interview of Nicholas Ray in *Movie* no. 9, 1963, conducted by Adriano Aprà, Barry Boys, Ian Cameron, José Luis Guarner, Paul Mayersberg and Victor Perkins:

THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS was severely criticised for not being *NANOOK OF THE NORTH*.

I could never hope, nor would I want to, reproduce *NANOOK*. If it took Flaherty two years, it would now take me four years. And the story, in any case, wasn't really about Eskimo life *per se*.

Wasn't it really about the way we allow social conventions to become moral absolutes?

Yes. The Eskimo woman says to the white men 'When you come to a strange land, bring your wives but not your laws'. I think that applies to many areas of the world today. I'm sure this is a five o'clock discussion at every caucus group at the United Nations every day, somehow or other.

In *THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS* the landscape helped to put the spirit of man in relief. That man could survive in this environment, and in the process of his survival have the wish and the need to communicate the results of his observation to another man, however unsuccessful it turned out in the end—this was the drama. The tragedy of the story is that no matter how well intended the two men, each has to return to his way of life. They have failed because of their two different societies. The time has not yet made it possible for the two cultures, the two civilisations to meet, where our advanced civilisation could possibly learn from the direct simplicity of the other. The people had much to give to each other, but they were broken apart by society and by man's inability to communicate. Therefore they have to go back to their environments. I think that the trooper's

environment is just as tough as the environment that the eskimo has to go back to.

I have the impression that the beginning of SAVAGE INNOCENTS was done on location, the second half in the studio.

No, most in the studio. Which is something of a tribute to Aldo Tonti. He had a very difficult lighting problem. And he insisted on a kind of lighting on the stage which technicians in England thought he was insane for. But he was absolutely right and I have seen the film with other cameramen who cannot tell where it's location and where it's studio. The second unit director in *THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS* did a very good job. We had sketched out in advance all the things that we needed.

KING OF KINGS

(March 6)

Director: Nicholas Ray.

U.S.A., 1961.

Script: Philip Yordan.

Photography: Franz Planer, Milton Krasner and Manuel Berenguer.

Special Effects: Lee Leblanc.

Music: Miklós Rózsa.

Leading Players: Jeffrey Hunter (*Jesus*), Robert Ryan (*John the Baptist*), Siobhan McKenna (*Mary*), Hurd Hatfield (*Pontius Pilate*). Narrated by Orson Welles.

Technicolor. Certificate U. 160 mins. Shot in 70mm; to be screened in 16mm.

'To the casual spectator, *KING OF KINGS* might appear to be a superproduction along the same lines as most Hollywood epics. But it is clear that Ray goes far beyond the conventions of the 'spectacle': that he examines the biblical text from a contemporary point of view. Through the history of Jesus, the director has sought to illustrate his favourite theme—that of the man torn between action and contemplation—as well as his ideas about non-conformity, liberty and violence. In order to outline the alternative of action in clearer relief Ray has examined Barabbas's political position, and by elevating him to the status of leader of the Jews' 'resistance', he has been able to give greater significance to Jesus's personality. Other characters are seen in the same relatively free relation to historical fact: for instance, that of Judas, which appears to have been inspired by the 'biography' by Lanza del Vasto. Four years later *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW*, by Pasolini, was to take a remarkably similar perspective on the same subject. Like Pasolini, Ray was interested less in the spectacular epic than in the intimate story.'

José Luis Guarner/*Homenaje a Nicholas Ray* (San Sebastian Film Festival, 1974)



LIGHTNING OVER WATER

(NICK'S MOVIE).

(March 21—23)

Directors: Nicholas Ray, Wim Wenders.

West Germany/Sweden, 1980.

Script: Nicholas Ray, Wim Wenders.

Photography: Ed Lachman, Martin Schafer, Mitch Dubin, Tim Ray, Tom Farrell.

Music: Ronée Blakley.

Featuring: Wim Wenders, Nicholas Ray, Ronée Blakley, Pierre Cottrell, Mitch Dubin, Tom Farrell, Becky Johnston, Martin Muller, Tim Ray, Susan Ray.

Colour. English dialogue. Certificate X. 91 minutes.

LIGHTNING OVER WATER is a film which courts all the dangers of morbid prurience inherent in its subject—a portrait of director Nicholas Ray in the weeks before he died of cancer—and somehow emerges safely on the other side, with an unimpaired sense of both itself and its subject. It begins, it must be said, in a way which leads one to anticipate the worst. In the hushed, slightly wheedling tones of one who expects us to find this an event of great and even *film noir*-ish significance, Wenders describes his arrival in New York at dawn early in 1979, having taken time off from his preparation of the (now aborted) *HAMMETT* project for Coppola. He ascends the stairs of a SoHo loft full of anticipation at meeting again one of the cinema's 'greats', describing their past association on *THE AMERICAN FRIEND*: 'We made it together, we played a lot of backgammon too and we became friends'.

What he finds is a man on the brink of death still worrying over his last unfinished work (the epic student film, *WE CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN*), and still able to discourse on his favourite theme—the need of home, the pain of homelessness—when invited to lecture after a screening of *THE LUSTY MEN* at Vassar College. Wenders follows and films him through these activities, confiding his doubts about the possible indignity (and betrayal) of what he is doing, and allowing us to see the kind of manipulation and anguished discussion that took place around the filming. But in the end, it is not Wenders' self-consciousness that convinces us of his good intentions. It is more our sense of the connection that already exists between the two men in terms of the films they have made—the most eccentric of which must be Wenders' adaptation of Hawthorne's *SCARLET LETTER* as a back-dated *JOHNNY GUITAR*. What happens in *LIGHTNING OVER WATER* is a strange transaction that validates both the relationship and this death-watching exercise: Wenders comes 'home' through his identification with Ray, the director who has provided him with his images of exile (*KINGS OF THE ROAD*, *ALICE IN THE CITIES*), and Ray (credited as co-director) is given this film as his last testament in lieu of the unfinishable *WE CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN*.

Richard Combs

ALEXANDER KLUGE

That mythical entity known as the New German Film is usually thought of as some kind of movement or national cinema, yet for British audiences it was for a long time defined in fairly narrow terms by the vagaries of distribution and critical favour. Effectively, it was identified with three individuals, informally called the 'triumvirate': Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Wim Wenders. Other names have of course emerged (Volker Schlöndorff, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Alexander Kluge, Jean-Marie Straub), but the triumvirate ruled more or less unchallenged in the mid to late 1970s and, with it, a popular journalistic theory about the New German Cinema which saw it as a direct descendant of the silent Expressionist classics in the best tradition of the Haunted Screen. The film-makers concerned have mostly reacted with puzzlement and irritation at being thus marketed as Teutonic exotica, repeatedly insisting that no such link exists with Weimar Germany. But certain of them, and in particular Herzog, have arguably courted this myth through the carefully cultivated public persona of the *poète maudit* and films like *NOSFERATU* and *HEART OF GLASS*.

There is, however, another tradition within the history of the German cinema, neglected by comparison with the Expressionist heritage, but at least equally significant: the tradition of critical realism exemplified by films like *KUHLE WAMPE*, *PEOPLE ON SUNDAY* and *JENSEITS DER STRASSE* (HARBOUR DRIFT) and surfacing again in some of the work of the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, the series of *Arbeiterfilme* made by Berlin film school graduates like Christian Ziewer for television (WDR). Or the work of some feminist film-makers, also mainly based in Berlin, such as Cristina Perincioli, Jutta Brückner, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Helga Reidemeister and Helke Sander (see the extensive bio-filmographies provided by Marc Silbermann in *Camera Obscura* No. 6). There is an unusually large number of women involved in film in some way (directing, editing, producing and scripting) in the Federal Republic, yet many critical accounts of the New German Cinema scarcely deign to mention them. One recent book (*The New German Cinema* by John Sandford) briefly discusses two female film-makers in a section labelled 'peculiarities'; another (*New German Film-makers*, edited by Klaus Phillips and yet to be published) plans to devote only two out of fourteen chapters to women directors, consigning the remainder to Appendix 11! Finally, the tradition also manifests itself in some of the work of individuals like Schlöndorff, Reinhard Hauff, Peter Fleischmann—and Alexander Kluge. Of this cluster of lesser-known names, that of Kluge is surely the one whose reputation in Britain is most grossly disproportionate to his importance in the development of the New German Cinema. He can justifiably lay claim to being one of its founder members; his is one of the few of the 26 signatures at the bottom of the now famous Oberhausen Manifesto (a document issued in 1962 by a group of aspiring film-makers as part of the campaign to win government funding for their work) which have not thereafter faded into oblivion. Far from it, in fact, for since then he has been active not only as a director whose work has consistently won critical acclaim if not always success with the German public, but also as a literary figure of some distinction and, perhaps most importantly of all, as the most powerful lobbyist for improved conditions for himself and his contemporaries, a figure whose legal training and acumen have proved invaluable in the ongoing battle—often waged on the arcane territory of constitutional theory—between the established commercial industry and independent film-makers for the lion's share of public funds. It will (necessarily) remain difficult to appreciate this aspect of Kluge's activities in Britain, but it is to be hoped that these screenings will help to gain more

exposure and attention for some important and original films.

Sheila Johnston

BIO-FILMOGRAPHY

Born in 1932 in Halberstadt. Studied jurisprudence, history and church music in Freiburg, Frankfurt and Marburg; completed his doctoral thesis on self-administration in the universities in 1956. Thereafter practised as a lawyer, but began to take an interest in film, observing Fritz Lang at work on the set of *THE INDIAN TOMB*, and in 1960 making his own first film, a short documentary, which in the following year won a major prize at the Oberhausen short Film Festival. In 1962 he was one of the group of film-makers who devised and signed the Oberhausen Manifesto, which called for State aid for a "new" German cinema. Probably in part because of his legal expertise, he was to become something of a spokesman for this group. He became head of the Institute for Film-making in Ulm and in 1963 founded his own production company, Karios-Film. His first feature, *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN* (*YESTERDAY GIRL*), was made in 1965-66 and won one of the main prizes at the Venice Film Festival in 1966, bringing the "New German Cinema" to the attention of international audiences for the first time. His second feature, *DIE ARTISTEN IN DER ZIRKUSKUPPEL: RATLOS* (*ARTISTS AT THE TOP OF THE BIG TOP: DISORIENTATED*), also won a prize at Venice in 1968, this time the coveted Golden Lion, the first German film to do so since the war. Meanwhile he was also winning awards for his literary work, and was active in film politics. He was one of the prime movers behind the founding of the Kuratorium, the first public funding agency, in 1965 and since then has lobbied incessantly for improved legislation for independent film-makers in Germany.

Main films:

- 1960: *Brutalität in Stein* (*Brutality in Stone*). Co-directed. Short
- 1961: *Rennen* (*Running*). Co-directed. Short.
- 1963: *Lehrer im Wandel* (*A Change for Teachers*). Co-directed. Short.
- 1964: *Porträt einer Bewährung* (*Portrait of a Verification*). Short.
- 1966: *Abschied von Gestern* (*Yesterday Girl*).
- 1967: *Frau Blackburn, geb 5 January 1872, wird gefilmt* (*Mrs. Blackburn, born Jan. 5 1892, is filmed*). Short.
- 1967: *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* (*Artists at the Top of the Big Top: Disorientated*).
- 1968: *Feuerlöscher E. A. Winterstein* (*Fireman E.A. Winterstein*). Short.
- 1969: *Die unbezähmbare Leni Peickert* (*The Indomitable Leni Peickert*).
- 1970: *Der grosse Verhau* (*The Big Beating-Up*).
- 1970: *Ein Arzt aus Halberstadt* (*A Doctor from Halberstadt*). Short.
- 1971: *Der Angriffsschlichter* (*The Destroyer*). Short.
- 1971: *Willi Tobler und der Untergang der 6 Flotte* (*Willi Tobler and the Destruction of the Sixth Fleet*).
- 1973: *Besitzbürgerin, Jahrgang 1908* (*A Woman from the Property-Owning Middle-Class, born in 1908*). Short.
- 1973: *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (*Occasional Work of a Female Slave*).
- 1974: *In Gefahr und grösster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* (*English title: The Middle of the Road is a Very Dead End*). Co-directed.
- 1975: *Der Starke Ferdinand* (*Strong-Man Ferdinand*).

- 1977: *Die Menschen, die das Staufer-Jahr vorbereiten* (*The People who are Preparing the Year of the Hohenstaufens*). Co-directed.
- 1977: *Nachrichten von den Stauern* (*News of the Hohenstaufens*). Co-directed. Short.
- 1977: *Zu böser Schlacht schleich' Ich heut nacht so bang* (revised version of the Willy Tobler film).
- 1978: *Contribution to the collective film Deutschland im Herbst* (*Germany in Autumn*).
- 1979: *Die Patriotin* (*The Patriot*)

YESTERDAY GIRL (Abschied von Gestern)

(January 27)

Director: Alexander Kluge.

West Germany, 1966.

Script: Alexander Kluge. Based partly on his book *Lebensläufe*.

Photography: Edgar Reitz, Thomas Mauch.

Leading players: Alexandra Kluge (*Anita G.*), Günther Mack (*Pichota*), Eva Maria Meinecke (*Frau Pichota*), Hans Korte (*The Judge*), Edith Kuntze-Pellogio (*Parole Board Officer*).

Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 90 minutes.

Kluge's first feature, which won a prize at the 1966 Venice Film Festival, was one of the earliest examples of the New German Cinema to gain wide attention. Centring on the misadventures of a 29-year-old woman (beautifully played by the director's sister, Alexandra) who finds herself at odds with West German society after her escape from the East, the film clearly establishes Kluge's main concerns and methods as a film-maker. As in many of his subsequent features, he uses a fictional story and a battery of cinematic devices to build up a mosaic portrait of contemporary German society and its problematic relationship to its past. At the time of its release, *YESTERDAY GIRL* was very well received by most critics, who were already noting the influences of Brecht and Godard, as the following extract from a review by David Wilson in *Sight and Sound* illustrates:

"... Comparisons with Brecht and Godard are inevitable. Like *VIVRE SA VIE*, Kluge's film (his first, and based on a story in his book *Lebensläufe*) is the casebook of a girl, Anita G, at odds with the world around her, a collage of scenes set in apparently arbitrary juxtaposition. And Brechtian in format as well as in structure, with chapter-headings and titles which have the effect of interrupting the dramatic unfolding of Anita's story. But where Godard, by this device, revealed Nana's reaction to the world, in Kluge's film what we see is not Anita's reaction to other people but other people's lack of reaction to her.

"Anita G is, in fact, the catalyst through which Kluge's picture of modern Germany is revealed. She is also in herself something of a symbol of the two Germanies: she has known, as a Jew, something of the sickness of Hitler's Reich, fled East Germany after the war ('I was afraid'), and is now an innocent abroad in the mechanised jungle of the other side of the wall. All this we learn from the opening sequence, a courtroom interrogation where the camera concentrates not on Anita but on the judge, who in a few pointed exchanges exposes himself as a figure combining the attributes of a judge (close-up of his hands as he delves into a legal textbook to clear up a nice judicial point) and of a certain kind of standard West German ('Do you mean that events possibly

observed in childhood . . . affect your situation today? Well, let's forget that—it's past.' He looks a very German judge, almost a parody of a non-German's idea of a German official. But he is also, clearly, Kluge's idea of a German judge. And this is the strength of the film: Kluge succeeds, where so many British directors have failed, in giving the feel of his own country, the reality behind the façade of the *Wirtschaftswunder*.

"Part of that façade is the tyranny of officialdom, and the film assembles a gallery of cold official faces (some of them real) and gives them the rope to hang themselves. Anita meets them all, and they all react to her with blank, machine-like responses, since to them she is just another case, part of the day's work. The woman from the welfare service, for instance, who first congratulates her organisation for its idealism, then asks Anita to offer prayers with her in thankfulness for the work they've found for her; or the probation psychiatrist ('Form another concept'); or the bewildered political science professor at the university where Anita tries unsuccessfully to enrol in an effort to improve herself ("No doubt you know your Rousseau"). As in *VIVRE SA VIE*, layer on layer is stripped off until the soul of the animal is laid bare. Here, though, it is the surface of a society that crumbles before us: we know little more of Anita at the end than we do at the beginning, but we know much more of the world she tries to come to terms with. Details are isolated, briefly and often elliptically. But never pointedly. The film is refreshingly free of the ring-master, crack-of-the-whip approach: Kluge simply makes his points and leaves us to draw our own conclusions . . ."



ARTISTS AT THE TOP OF THE BIG TOP: DISORIENTATED (Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos)

(January 28)

Director: Alexander Kluge.
West Germany, 1968.
Script: Alexander Kluge.
Photography: Günther Hörmann, Thomas Mauch.
Leading players: Hannelore Hoger (Leni Peickert), Siegfried Graue (Manfred Peickert), Alfred Edel (Dr. Busch), Berndt Höltz (Herr von Lüptow), Eva Oertel (Gitti Bornemann), Kurt Jürgens (Trainer Mackensen).
Part in colour. English subtitles. Certificate X. 103 minutes. 16 mm print.

" . . . Like *YESTERDAY GIRL*, only more so, Kluge's second film is a fragmented mosaic of word and image, precise quotation and oblique allusion. The framework is the circus. Manfred Peickert, trapeze artist, dreams of creating a new kind of circus. 'If elephants could hang in the big top . . . I'd find it so beautiful and funny—they'd build it up. I can't express it better.' When he falls to his death in the ring, his daughter Leni inherits his dream. Her circus will be reformed, with the animals performing 'authentically', acts which will astonish by their audacity but will at the same time directly relate to the natural order of things. But the banks don't regard elephants as a good security and Leni runs up debts. A legacy from a

millionaire friend solves the problem of capital, but at the last moment Leni realises that even her reformed circus will compromise her ideals. So she liquidates the circus and joins her colleagues in television. Lots of small steps, she decides, may be better than one big step which can never be realised.

"Utopia, Leni says, will improve while we wait for it. But we don't have to wait for the end for this half-admitted disenchantment. Throughout the film ideas, clearly envisaged but inarticulately expressed, are disconcertingly undermined by contradiction. The opening title sums it up: 'You have achieved this high position. Now you don't know what to do. Merely to care is not enough.' Manfred Peickert records that the circus director conceded that his elephant idea was possible but rejected it as irrational. Leni's programme for her reformed circus includes such items as an elephant charging at the spectators and polar bears lighting a fire in the big top to warm themselves; but as the animal trainer tells her, only the jungle is authentic. And though she claims that the injustices of the status quo require an artist 'to perform his art with ever greater convolution,' she herself is soon forced to admit that she 'can't be an entrepreneur and remain an artiste.' She wants to change the circus, she says, because she loves it; to which the commentary replies that it's because she loves it that she won't change it. The elephants swear they will never forget, but go on performing to order. The system is self-perpetuating; only a capitalist can change what is, and what capitalist is going to?

"This pattern of contradiction is reflected in the film's contrapuntal structure, the constant juxtaposition of lucid images and obscure ideas being itself a formal expression of the artist disorientated by the seemingly inevitable compromise between theory and practice (followed to its logical conclusion, of course, in Godard's *GAI SAVOIR*). On the one hand, illustrations of famous circuses of the past, stories about superlative feats in the ring, performers with grandiose ideas for acts and optimistic statements about artists uniting to change the world. On the other, flatly shot scenes of rehearsal and performance, the big top being dismantled at night, elephants stumbling across a forbidden frontier—above all, the mocking presence of a camera which probes the faces of characters whose words are sadly, even pathetically, unequal to the ideas they are trying to express.

"The allusions are on occasion bewilderingly obscure, and one suspects that there are specifically German innuendoes which will inevitably fall on deaf English ears. But even if one fails to catch every nuance, the underlying theme is never obscured by the surface complexity. Images may appear at first glance to be non-referential, in that they don't have the obvious resonance of, for instance, the scene in *YESTERDAY GIRL* when the organiser of a dog-training club enthuses about the desirability of all dogs joining the club; but closer inspection (and Kluge likens his film to a gramophone record which one buys because its content can't be assimilated at a single hearing) reveals their place in the general fabric.

"The circus is, of course, the perfect all-purpose symbol, and the film offers a number of subsidiary interpretations running parallel to its central theme. The big top as an analogy for the German cinema, and more broadly for Germany itself. In the opening newsreel of the 1939 Day of German Art parade, Hitler the ringmaster reviews his performing animals while the soundtrack warbles with a Beatles song in praise of yesterday. 'Who, after Auschwitz, will stop us saying what we must?' chants a chorus of circus proprietors, in congress at Nuremberg. Freedom, says Leni, means that the audience accepts the entertainment we offer; but her programme for the reformed circus is no more than a set of elaborations on familiar routines, and as her friend Dr. Busch reminds her, a lot of people won't want to pay money to sit on a wooden bench when they can watch the circus on television in comfort.

"But the film's very diffuseness resists attempts to pin down particular allusions. They remain, as Kluge intends them to, part of the general dialectic between artist and audience. A journalist asks Leni whether she doesn't think it dangerous to mix heterogeneous genres. Kluge would probably admit that it is, but only because Leni's problems are a reflection of his own, or indeed of those of anyone with an impulse to acrobatics on the high trapeze in a society which prefers its artists to accept the security of a net."

David Wilson/*Sight and Sound*



OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE (Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin)

(January 27)

Director: Alexander Kluge.
West Germany, 1973.
Script: Alexander Kluge, Hans Drawe, H.D. Müller.
Photography: Thomas Mauch.
Music: (various).
Leading players: Alexandra Kluge (Roswitha Bronski), Franz Bronski (Franz Bronski), Sylvia Gartmann (Sylvia), Traugott Buhre (Dr. Ernest Kenée), Ursula Dirichs (Mrs. A. Willek), Walter Flamme (Director of Beauchamp & Co.).
Black and white. English subtitles. Certificate X. 91 minutes.

Roswitha Bronski is a 29-year-old Frankfurt housewife and former nurse. Ironically, she supports her children and husband Franz, a research chemist, by performing illegal abortions, in order to be able to afford more children of her own. She refers the more complicated operations to a friend in exchange for medical equipment. All runs smoothly until a series of unfortunate incidents put an end to her occupation: a rival abortionist reports her activities to the police after she performs an unsuccessful abortion; her husband is arrested instead of her, but is later released. These events propel her into a life of political activism, and her husband is forced to assume the role of family breadwinner by going to work at a chemical factory. Her activities and outrage are expressed by protests about the poor conditions of the workers, and she proceeds to investigate the chemical company's secret plans to close the plant and transfer operations to Portugal. Her political work begins to isolate her from Franz, who loses his job as a direct consequence of her agitation in his place of work. The final irony is that, in order to support the family once again, Roswitha opens a kiosk in front of the factory, selling sausages wrapped in propaganda leaflets.

This film caused some controversy in Germany, but was on the whole well received in this country. Most reviewers drew attention to what was seen as Kluge's Godardian style and his "typical" theme of the idealistic, obsessive individual "in an age of collective struggles." Thus, for instance, this response from Tony Rayns in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*: " . . . It's a movie that we're shown for our 'insight' into Roswitha's ideals and motivations . . . just as we are made privy to her reveries as she wanders through the deserted Beauchamp factory or gazes rapturously at heroic prints of the 1789 and 1848 revolutions. These 'subjective' sequences offer the key to Kluge's entire method in the film. Their emotional intensity defines the idealism that keeps Roswitha (and doubtless many a radical like her) going against the combined weight of the various forces oppressing her; simple political heroism explains the naivety of many of Roswitha's actions . . . and their status

as explicit illusions throws into relief Kluge's own practice in making his film. He counterpoints Roswitha's subjective visions with 'objective' views (in Brechtian style) of her enemies in action: the rival abortionist writing her anonymous letter, an extraordinary conference of young executives discussing new security methods. And he counterpoints the rhetorical qualities of the visions by eschewing most of film's expressive possibilities from his own exposition. The final element in Kluge's film discourse is the combination of narrative and captions (owing, as before in Kluge's work, a good deal to Godard), which sets the banalities of Roswitha's life and political efforts in naggingly insistent philosophical and theoretical contexts . . ."

However, the relation between voice-over commentary, extra-narrative components (e.g. the excerpt from CHAPEYEV towards the beginning of the film) and Roswitha's story is perhaps more complex and difficult to establish than this analysis seems to imply. Do the first two elements represent Kluge's authorial voice, thus providing the "truth" to set against Roswitha's misguided understanding, or does the film refuse to provide a coherent meta-discourse, juxtaposing contradictory ideas but leaving the contradictions unresolved? Some members of the West German women's movement took the former view, sharply criticising Kluge's patronising treatment of his female protagonist. The Berlin-based film magazine, *Frauen und Film*, published three articles attacking it on these grounds. This is what Helke Sander (best known in Britain for her film *THE ALL-ROUND REDUCED PERSONALITY*) had to say: "For us the film is an active contribution towards maintaining the patriarchal system . . . Kluge's heroine is a traditional man's heroine. The message of the film is that women's struggles lead to nothing . . . It seems to me that the distinguishing feature of the film is that Roswitha always evades precisely those problems presented in a scene and does something totally absurd. All the sequences call for Roswitha's relationship with her husband to be problematised, but instead she goes to Portugal, even though her problem is there in her own home."

A related criticism takes issue with what is seen as the film's refusal adequately to engage with the questions it raises around sexual politics. Roswitha's oppression is shown to originate primarily in the family, and with West Germany's stringent anti-abortion law (Paragraph 218), at that time a burning topical issue (the law has since been somewhat liberalised). Yet her activism is directed towards threats (e.g. the factory closure) more remote from her own experience. In *Film Quarterly*, Karyn Kay wrote: "Instead of pushing off into factory organising, perhaps the women should start with issues of greatest relevance and immediacy to their own lives. One problem is that Roswitha and Sylvia never direct their political activity inward, to analysing their family situations. Questions from Engels on the obsolescence of the family float across the screen, yet Sylvia and Roswitha are loath to channel this radical feminism into their political theory. As wives and mothers and childbearers, their workplace is primarily in the home and secondarily in the factory. Perhaps they should be agitating towards legalising abortion. As Kluge has pointed out, women, like the working class, should demand control over the means of production—or, in this case, the process of reproduction. But instead of politicising towards change in the abortion laws—an issue hotly debated in top West German courts around the time Kluge's film was in production—the women give abortions on the sly and seem to accept the establishment's estimation of themselves as 'low life'."

The film has been sharply attacked for what was seen as its equivocal position towards the abortion question. A graphic sequence towards the beginning of the film appeared to represent abortion as repellent; a close-up of an aborted foetus buried under a pile of surgical instruments seemed to show it twitching with vestigial life. In a book, also entitled *Occasional Work of a Female Slave* and published two years after the release of the film, Kluge responded to these criticisms: "We are often asked in discussions why we cast women in the roles of particularly limited people in our films and whether we are not afraid of being attacked as male directors assumed to be making fun of women. But we have an obvious reason for this. In addition to the alienation suffered by the workforce in our society, women are doubly oppressed, and it is perfectly legitimate to begin

analysis from the point of greatest oppression. Often these roles are not women in terms of gender, but rather the symbols of an oppression which is also suffered by people other than women . . . We assume that women's conditions of production, precisely because of their oppression, have formal properties which must be understood by other social classes if they are to change their specific mode of production."

Sheila Johnston

STRONG-MAN FERDINAND (Der Starke Ferdinand)

(February 9)

Director: Alexander Kluge.
West Germany, 1976.

Script: Alexander Kluge. Based on his own short story "Ein Bolschewist des Kapitals" in *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang*.

Photography: Thomas Mauch, Martin Schäfer.

Leading players: Heinz Schubert (*Ferdinand Rieche*), Verena Rudolph (*Gerte Kahlman*), Joachim Hackethal (*Knibeling*), Heinz Shimmelfennig (*Ganter*), Gert Günter Hoffmann (*Wilutzki*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Certificate not yet issued. 98 minutes. 16mm print.

With this film, Kluge tried to break with his own reputation as a difficult and esoteric director and to work within a more conventional and accessible narrative format. This is how one German critic saw *FERDINAND* and its stylistic differences from Kluge's earlier work: "Although *STRONG-MAN FERDINAND* is another film with typical Klugean themes and characters, the narrative is much more coherent compared with his earlier films. The editing is less important; the development of ideas and associations gives way to the plot itself (although even here Kluge establishes a second level by means of an intermittent voice-over commentary). The first half of the film consists of a series of comic or eccentric events and also describes Rieche's relationship to a woman employee at the works whom he has caught engaged in petty pilfering; not until the second half does the film gain momentum and develop the real background to the story with which Kluge is actually concerned: the hidden growth in private security forces as a repressive phenomenon in our society; the danger that these para-military units, left to themselves or in the pursuit of success, will develop their own initiative. Kluge largely dispenses with the metaphoric potential of his theme in order to allow his protagonist to appear as a normal, average person. In stylistic terms, *STRONG-MAN FERDINAND* is less fragmented and fertile than Kluge's earlier films, but it is more easily accessible." (Ulrich Gregor/*Herzog, Kluge, Straub*.)

Though formally dissimilar to Kluge's other films, *FERDINAND* was seen by most reviewers as having strong thematic affinities to his work as a whole. "Contradictions inform the whole of Kluge's work, providing him at once with a method and a fertile field of observation. 'An armada of first-class individuals in an age of collective struggles' is the phrase he himself uses to introduce the portraits that make up his fragmented fiction *Learning Process with Lethal Conclusion*. Its separate characters—a gigolo, a schoolteacher, a factory worker, a prostitute—respond to the feeling that their lives are meaningless and futile by an excess of professional zeal, trying to preserve the values of the artisan in an era of impersonal mass production. Their idealism—or, more particularly, its extremism—makes them dangerous, both to the State and to themselves. One such zealot is the factory security officer in the story "A Bolshevik for Capitalism", now fleshed out into the title character of the film *STRONG-MAN FERDINAND* . . . It is the first of Kluge's feature films to involve a male rather than a female protagonist, and also the first to observe a practical proletarian rather than a bourgeois intellectual. Despite this, and despite the successful surface farce, there is no mistaking the kinship between Ferdinand and Kluge's earlier lady Utopians, all striving to discover individual solutions to the collective forces that shape and engulf their lives." (Jan Dawson/*Take One*.)

Kluge's concern to make a film with greater mass appeal was signalled by, among other things, the casting of Heinz Schubert in the leading role (Schubert was a popular television actor, best known as the Warren Mitchell character in the German version of *Till Death Us Do Part*). As Kluge noted, however, the choice was also a risky one, since it depended on an actor's public image which would be meaningless outside Germany. All the more ironic, then, that the film enjoyed considerable success abroad, especially in France (it won the International Critics' Prize at the Cannes Film Festival), but, like so many other New German films, was scarcely seen by domestic audiences. What went wrong? Hostility from the trade press towards the film's politics and aesthetics (but this is nothing new: most products of the New German Cinema are seen here as a threat and viewed with great mistrust); incomprehension from the "quality" press and, most disastrous of all, a printers' strike throughout the summer when the film was released—no newspapers, therefore no reviews and no publicity. The Critics' Prize at the Cannes Film Festival came as an unexpected boost and, after discussing the film with audiences, Kluge prepared a new version about nine minutes shorter than the original, which was then re-released in Germany in 1977. A sobering example of the distribution problems facing New German film-makers, even for the figure who had fought hardest to improve conditions in this respect. Kluge recalled: "I observed audiences on twenty-six occasions and discussed my film in the same way as it was seen in Cannes. Audience reaction is not the reason why the film did so badly. The reason is the control of access to the public. There is nothing worse than what cinema owners consider to be 'entertaining', and nothing more wretched than the political curiosity of German film journalists. They block the channels of information." (*Konkret*.)

Sheila Johnston

GERMANY IN AUTUMN (Deutschland im Herbst)

(January 28)

Directors: Heinrich Böll, Alf Brustellin, Bernhard Sinkel, Hans Peter Cloos, Katja Rupé, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Maximiliane Mainka, Peter Schubert, Edgar Reitz, Volker Schlöndorff.
West Germany, 1978.

Script: Heinrich Böll, Peter Steinbach.

Photography: Michael Ballhaus, Jürgen Jürges, Bodo Kessler, Dietrich Lohmann, Colin Mounieir, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwin.

Music/Songs: "Autumn Song", Op. 37, No. 10, by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky; "Kaiserhymne" by Josef Hayden, Hoffman von Fallersleben; "Here's to You" by Ennio Morricone, Joan Baez, performed by Joan Baez.

Leading players: Hannelore Hoger (*Gabi Teichert*), Katja Rupé (*Franziska Busch*), Hans Peter Cloos (*'Foreigner'*), Angela Winkler (*Antigone*), Franziska Walser (*Ismene*), Vadim Glowna (*Freiermuth*), Helmut Griem (*Mahler's Interviewer*), Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

Colour. English subtitles. Certificate X. 123 minutes (cut from 134).

GERMANY IN AUTUMN is a collective reaction to a series of events that shook German society during 1977. This is how Ruth McCormick described them in *Cineaste*: "In the wake of Schleyer, the Mogadishu hijacking and the alleged suicides of Baader, Esslin and Raspe at Stammheim prison, conservatives and reactionaries were on the march, the left seemed powerless and the average German citizen was left bewildered and without any adequate explanation as to what had really happened. . ."

This film has often been described as the first collective project of any substance to have come out of the New German Cinema since the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962. But by all accounts the collaborative enterprise did not always run smoothly. Kluge: "The directors are identified with extremely different approaches to the cinema, from video to Hollywood, and so the film is actually a document about what German cinema can or can't do. It was an attempt at working co-operatively. Five of the film's nine directors worked consistently from start to finish with the film's editor, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus,

JANUARY

Wed. 6	NASHVILLE (AA) Overlooked or Underrated: UNFAITHFULLY YOURS (A)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Thu. 7	THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE. (X)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 8	NASHVILLE (AA) THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (X)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sat. 9	NASHVILLE (AA) THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (X)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sun. 10	Bergman: PORT OF CALL (X) & FRENZY (A) THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (X)	2.30 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Mon. 11	THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (X)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Tue. 12	THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (X)	2.30, 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Wed. 13	BAD TIMING (X) 92 IN THE SHADE (Club) & THE JERICHO MILE (Club)	3.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m.
Thu. 14	HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 15	BAD TIMING (X) HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sat. 16	BAD TIMING (X) HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sun. 17	Bergman: WAITING WOMEN (X) & SUMMER INTERLUDE (U) HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	2.30 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Mon. 18	HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Tue. 19	HONEYSUCKLE ROSE (A)	2.30, 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Wed. 20	COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER (A) Ray: THEY LIVE BY NIGHT (A) & ON DANGEROUS GROUND (A)	3.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m.
Thu. 21	Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 22	COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER (A) Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sat. 23	COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER (A) Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sun. 24	Bergman: SAWDUST AND TINSEL (X) & SUMMER WITH MONIKA (A) Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	2.30 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Mon. 25	Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Tue. 26	Bergman: FROM THE LIFE OF THE MARIONETTES (X)	2.30, 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Wed. 27	Overlooked or Underrated: STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE (U) Kluge: YESTERDAY GIRL (X) Kluge: OCCASIONAL WORK OF A FEMALE SLAVE (X)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 p.m. 8.30 p.m.
Thu. 28	Kluge: ARTISTS AT THE TOP OF THE BIG TOP: DISORIENTATED (X) Kluge: GERMANY IN AUTUMN (X)	6.15 p.m. 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 29	Overlooked or Underrated: STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE (U) Buñuel: THE DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID (AA)	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

Sat. 30 Overlooked or Underrated:
STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE (U) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
Buñuel: THE DIARY OF A
CHAMBERMAID (AA) 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

Sun. 31 Bergman: JOURNEY INTO AUTUMN (X)
& A LESSON IN LOVE (X) 2.30 p.m.
1 + 1 = 3 (AA) & WIVES (X) 7.00 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Mon. 1	1 + 1 = 3 (AA) & WIVES (X)	7.00 p.m.
Tue. 2	1 + 1 = 3 (AA) & WIVES (X)	2.30 & 7.00 p.m.
Wed. 3	THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY (X) Bergman: SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT (X)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Thu. 4	THE CONSTANT FACTOR (A) & RAILWAY & COALFACE	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 5	THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY (X) THE CONSTANT FACTOR (A) & RAILWAY & COALFACE	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sat. 6	THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY (X) THE CONSTANT FACTOR (A) & RAILWAY & COALFACE	3.00 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sun. 7	Looking at Prostitution: CAMILLE (A) Kluge: THE PATRIOT (A)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Mon. 8	Kluge: THE PATRIOT (A)	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Tue. 9	Kluge: STRONG MAN FERDINAND (Club) Kluge: THE PATRIOT (A)	6.15 p.m. 2.30 & 8.30 p.m.
Wed. 10	EAST OF EDEN (A) & JAMES DEAN: FIRST AMERICAN TEENAGER (U) Ray: REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (AA) & IN A LONELY PLACE (A)	2.30 p.m. 7.00 p.m.
Thu. 11	Black Independent Film-makers' Event: Programme I Programme II Programme III: KILLER OF SHEEP CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH	10.00 a.m. - 12.15 p.m. 1.30 - 3.30 p.m. 6.30 p.m. 8.30 p.m.
Fri. 12	EAST OF EDEN (A) & JAMES DEAN: FIRST AMERICAN TEENAGER (U) CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH	2.30 & 11.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Sat. 13	Looking at Prostitution: THE REVOLT OF MAMIE STOVER (A) CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH EAST OF EDEN (A) & JAMES DEAN: FIRST AMERICAN TEENAGER (U)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m. 11.00 p.m.
Sun. 14	Ray: PARTY GIRL (A) Looking at Prostitution: KLUTE (X) CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH	2.30 p.m. 4.15 p.m. 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Mon. 15	CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH	6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Tue. 16	CITIZENS BAND (AA) & RIVERWORK & LAUNCH	2.30, 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.
Wed. 17	Looking at Prostitution: PRETTY BABY (X) Bergman: WILD STRAWBERRIES (A) THE SEVENTH SEAL (X)	3.00 p.m. 6.15 p.m. 8.30 p.m.
Thu. 18	Buñuel: THE MILKY WAY (A) & LA MORT EN CE JARDIN (X)	7.00 p.m.

C A L E N D A R

Fri. 19 Looking at Prostitution:
PRETTY BABY (X) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
Buñuel: THE MILKY WAY (A)
& LA MORT EN CE JARDIN (X) 7.00 p.m.

Sat. 20 Looking at Prostitution:
PRETTY BABY (X) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
Buñuel: THE MILKY WAY (A)
& LA MORT EN CE JARDIN (X) 7.00 p.m.

Sun. 21 Looking at Prostitution:
TAKING A PART & A PARTICULAR
KIND OF JOB 3.00 pm.
With Lecture/Discussion
PROSTITUTE (X) & MR SKIPPER
& A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY 6.00 p.m.
BROTHERS AND SISTERS (AA)
& NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET
& INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN 8.30 p.m.

Mon.22 Looking at Prostitution:
PROSTITUTE (X) & MR SKIPPER
& A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY 6.00 p.m.
Looking at Prostitution:
BROTHERS AND SISTERS (AA)
& NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET
& INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN 8.30 p.m.

Tue. 23 Looking at Prostitution:
PROSTITUTE (X) & MR SKIPPER
& A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY 2.30 & 6.00 p.m.
Looking at Prostitution:
BROTHERS AND SISTERS (AA)
& NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET
& INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN 8.30 p.m.

Wed.24 Hopper: EASY RIDER (X) 2.30 p.m.
& AMERICAN DREAMER (AA)
Ray: BIGGER THAN LIFE (X)
& THE JAMES BROTHERS (U) 7.00 p.m.

Thu. 25 MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Fri. 26 Hopper: EASY RIDER (X) 2.30 & 11.00 p.m.
& AMERICAN DREAMER (AA)
MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sat. 27 Hopper: EASY RIDER (X) 2.30 & 11.00 p.m.
& AMERICAN DREAMER (AA)
MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sun. 28 Bergman: THE DEVIL'S EYE (X) 2.00 p.m.
& THE FACE (X)
MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

MARCH

Mon. 1 MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Tue. 2 MEPHISTO (AA) 2.30, 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Wed. 3 THE STUNTMAN (X) 3.00 p.m.
Hopper: MAD DOG (X) 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

Thu. 4 MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Fri. 5 THE STUNTMAN (X) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sat. 6 Ray: KING OF KINGS (U) 2.30 p.m.
MEPHISTO (AA) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.
THE STUNTMAN (X) 11.00 p.m.

Sun. 7 Ray: THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS (A) 3.00 p.m.
Buñuel: THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE
BOURGEOISIE (AA) & THE PHANTOM OF
LIBERTY (X) 6.30 p.m.

Mon. 8 Buñuel: THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE
BOURGEOISIE (AA) & THE PHANTOM OF
LIBERTY (X) 6.30 p.m.

Tue. 9 Buñuel: THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE
BOURGEOISIE (AA) & THE PHANTOM OF
LIBERTY (X) 2.30 & 6.30 p.m.

Wed.10 Hopper: KID BLUE (A) 2.00 p.m.
& EAGLE'S WING (A)
Bergman: THE VIRGIN SPRING (X) 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

Thu. 11 CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Fri. 12 Hopper: KID BLUE (A) 2.00 & 11.00 p.m.
& EAGLE'S WING (A)
CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sat. 13 Hopper: KID BLUE (A) 2.00 & 11.00 p.m.
& EAGLE'S WING (A)
CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sun. 14 Ray: BITTER VICTORY (A) 2.15 p.m.
& WIND ACROSS THE EVERGLADES (A)
(latter unconfirmed)
CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Mon.15 CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Tue. 16 CITY OF WOMEN (X) 2.30, 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Wed.17 DAYS OF HEAVEN (A) 2.00 p.m.
& THE DUELLISTS (A)
Hopper: TRACKS (X) 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

Thu. 18 CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Fri. 19 DAYS OF HEAVEN (A) 2.00 & 11.00 p.m.
& THE DUELLISTS (A)
CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sat. 20 DAYS OF HEAVEN (A) 2.00 & 11.00 p.m.
& THE DUELLISTS (A)
CITY OF WOMEN (X) 5.45 & 8.15 p.m.

Sun. 21 Bergman: WINTER LIGHT (A) &
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY (X) 3.00 p.m.
Ray/Hopper: LIGHTNING OVER WATER (AA)
& THE AMERICAN FRIEND (A) 6.30 p.m.

Mon.22 Ray/Hopper: LIGHTNING OVER WATER (AA)
& THE AMERICAN FRIEND (A) 6.30 p.m.

Tue. 23 Ray/Hopper: LIGHTNING OVER WATER (AA)
& THE AMERICAN FRIEND (A) 2.30 & 6.30 p.m.

Wed.24 Hopper: APOCALYPSE NOW (X) 3.00 p.m.
Lecture/Discussion on Nicholas Ray,
led by Victor Perkins 7.00 p.m.
Ray: THE LUSTY MEN (U) 8.30 p.m.

Thu. 25 Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Fri. 26 Hopper: APOCALYPSE NOW (X) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Sat. 27 Hopper: APOCALYPSE NOW (X) 3.00 & 11.00 p.m.
Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Sun. 28 Bergman: THE SILENCE (Club) 2.30 p.m.
Lecture/Discussion on Ingmar Bergman,
led by Philip Strick 4.15 p.m.
Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Mon.29 Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Tue. 30 Hopper: OUT OF THE BLUE (X)
& ESTUARY & NEW EARTH 2.30, 6.00 & 8.30 p.m.

Wed.31 Hopper: THE LAST MOVIE (Club)
(Unconfirmed) 6.15 & 8.30 p.m.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

All screenings will be held in the Arts Lab Cinema.
With double-bill programmes the main film (listed first) will be screened after
the support (listed second).
Club performances are only open to members and their guests. All other
performances are open to the public.

HOLT STREET BIRMINGHAM B7 4BA 021-359 2403/4192

who had almost total control because she worked at the editing table. Those five were Schlöndorff, Fassbinder, Sinkel, Brustellin and myself. The others made individualistic films, which makes the overall film somewhat heavy at times. But we thought that a film recording the nation's contradictions should also record that conflict between individualism and collectivism. That's why we decided not to leave anyone out. It's a risk in terms of the audience, who might become impatient at times. But we trust that the first third and last third of the film will have enough substance to carry the extra carriages in the middle. We all stand by this film because you can't at the same time make a value of efficiency and of co-operation. If you believe in co-operation, you have to stick to this principle, even when some people aren't co-operating as much as they might. I see the film rather like a bookshop: you can find treasures and kitsch side by side in it." (*Berlinale Tip*.)

How does this spirit of eclecticism translate itself into the film? For one observer it lacks the coherence which, he believes, it would have been given by a single unifying vision. "The two world wars of the twentieth century; German nineteenth-century art; political film-making; domestic homosexual tyranny; a heavily ironic discussion of a TV production of Sophocles' *Antigone*; documentary footage of the burial of the 'victim' and 'perpetrators' of urban terrorism. This and much more has been scooped up at short notice by twelve film-makers from the Federal Republic . . . in this uneven attempt to gauge the spirit of West Germany in the autumn of 1977. As in Syberberg's gargantuan *HITLER*, everything—in a number of grating modes—is held to be fair game for analysis, but the makers of *DEUTSCHLAND IM HERBST* lack a unified vision, comparable to Syberberg's, capable of creating some sort of synthesis (however idiosyncratic) from all these disparate elements" (John Pym/*Monthly Film Bulletin*.)

Another reviewer argues that the pluralist ethos of the film renders it politically innocuous, the very incarnation of the liberal ideal of freedom of speech. "One should not underestimate the fact that—in the present climate of hysteria, repression and self-censorship—terrorism and its relatively private consequences are becoming taboo subjects and one which it takes a political courage merely to name. Nonetheless, the collective statement of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* becomes primarily the fact of speaking: the cumulative statement is itself barely distinguishable from the consensus opinion of the official news channels—'Once the atrocities have reached a certain point, it no longer matters who started them—you just want them to stop'. The film serves to alert foreign audiences to the prevalence of fear and self-censorship in 'everyday' German life, eroding the unconscious even of the free thinkers; it may also serve to alert domestic audiences to possible connections between past and present, between fear and intolerance. Yet, the film's very determination to remain a collective statement determines that it should in fact emerge as a formal pluralist endorsement of pluralistic democracy . . . The sum of its parts makes it a clarion call, not for action, but for less action, belonging more in the category of a 'vigilante movie' than in any existing category of agit-prop. With its cumulative emphasis on the need for individual awareness and self-criticism, it achieves something of an elegiac helplessness from which it shows the desire to escape but not the means. It observes and juxtaposes contradictions, but their dialectical relationship is by no means obvious at all times." (Jan Dawson/*Take One*.)

It could be objected, though, that the film was conceived as a spontaneous response, a gut reaction rather than a considered piece of political analysis, a fact which highlights the changes in meaning undergone by a work when transferred from its original context. Many British journalists saw the film as a strictly German phenomenon, an expression of malaise at the state of the nation, or else in terms of national stereotypes: "German artists very rapidly cast themselves in the role of romantic outsiders" (*New Society*). Rather fewer discussed its implications for a political cinema and only one paused to wonder whether such a film, and moreover a commercially successful film like *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, could have been made in Britain about a sensitive issue like Northern Ireland (*The Guardian*). In that light, it would be inappropriate to judge the politics of *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* too severely.

Sheila Johnston

THE PATRIOT (Die Patriotin)

(February 7-9)

Director: Alexander Kluge.

West Germany, 1979.

Script: Alexander Kluge; consultants: Willi Segler, Hans-Dieter Müller, Dagmar Steuer, Christl Buschmann, Helke Sander, Karin Steinborn, Bion Steinborn.

Photography: Thomas Mauch, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Werner Lüding, Günther Hörmann.

Leading players: Hannelore Hoyer (*Gabi Teichert*), Alfred Edel (*Theo Mürke, District Attorney*), Alexander von Eschwege (*Fred Tacke, Officer in 1939*), Hans Heckel (*Fairy-tales expert*).

Part in colour. English subtitles. Certificate A. 120 minutes.

THE PATRIOT is perhaps the most ambitious and richly allusive exploration of German history and its relation to everyday reality that Kluge and his collaborators have provided to date. Following on from the director's episode in GERMANY IN AUTUMN, it re-introduces Gabi Teichert, the history teacher who finds it impossible to 'teach' the subject to her students and is involved (literally) in digging into her country's history at night with a spade. "This time, she is digging deeper," says Kluge, who here adopts the outrageously imaginative ploy of providing a perspective from the point of view of the dead by taking on the narration as the voice of a dead knee of one Corporal Wieland, who fell at Stalingrad ("Several things in German history look quite different when seen from the point of view of a dead knee"). Again making extensive use of documentary footage, fairytale illustrations and fictional sequences, Kluge's collage aesthetic reaches giddy heights, giving Gabi the practical tools to work on a new perspective on history, one not to be found in the libraries or the classroom.

THE PATRIOT was the first film made by Kluge following completion of the collective project *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*. It was also intended originally to be a collaboration (with Herzog, Syberberg, Fassbinder and a group of documentary film-makers). In the end, the only other director to contribute was Margarethe von Trotta, who is responsible for the "Army Song" sequence. However, Kluge claims that, "in practical terms the film has several authors. For instance, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, who is co-author with the editing of the film. She, for example, had the idea of the knee. Other authors are Hannelore Hoyer the leading actress, the four cameramen, and Alexander von Eschwege, who invented the technique for shooting at night. The authentic texts in the film are always made up by the people who speak them. The film has no director's credit."

In the book published to accompany and supplement the film, Kluge describes a problem familiar to most New German directors. The public funding agencies which put up the necessary cash require detailed screenplays, whereas most film-makers are more adept at visualising their ideas than at preparing elegant and literary scripts. "Practitioners say 'Films are shot, not written', but a lot of people sitting in offices and on committees feel that a 100-page screenplay is something they can get hold of—they place their trust in words instead of in images. So there is a surfeit of subsidies for scripts: three different sources. But the research that is so important to practitioners, travelling around, test shots, all the things which are the *real* preparation for the film, which enable a lively approach to film-making, all that is looked down on . . . When I was producing *THE PATRIOT*, it is true that I covered with writing about 600 A-4 size pages. For a film like this does not consist only of what can be shown in 121 minutes in a 35 mm format but of about five times that amount of footage and documentation which is not included in the film—of 35 mm, 16 mm and video material, images which have been collected, ideas which have been tried out in the form of texts, because tests like that cost less than to shoot them on film. The film as process needs to make detours. However, the starting point was not something written down, but an observation: the director Günther Hörmann and myself are looking around the SPD party conference in Hamburg, the conference of the victors, as it were, after Mogadishu. We have a camera with us. Our motive: *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*. The actress

Hannelore Hoyer visits us. She becomes totally involved in the conference, seeking out people who are working rather than speaking, making this basic distinction. Afterwards, she sits exhausted on her luggage and allows the speeches to work upon her. The Chancellor is giving a speech that goes on for four hours. We ask her how she is getting on. She replies: 'I'm listening to what my Chancellor has to say to me.' We are certain that the Chancellor does not even know that she is sitting there and wonder why she assumes as a matter of course that he is speaking to her. This impression is the starting point for our film. We convince Hannelore Hoyer that she should be included in the sequences filmed at the conference as the fictional character Gabi Teichert, a role that we quickly invent for her. All the rest of the film (apart from some massive detours that take us about two years) is a consequence of this. There are doubtless certain films which need a script because of their internal organisation [e.g. period films]. On the other hand, films which follow through contemporary interests and which are based on observations are made needlessly inflexible by a shooting script or shooting schedule. They require a strategy. It is more like when someone is investigating a piece of news. He wouldn't be doing that if he already knew what the news was and had written it down . . . A script can be the equivalent of a working hypothesis. But then many scripts, or working hypotheses, are necessary for the various scenes, aspects, origins of a film. Films that no longer surprise the film-maker will probably always be bad films. They won't surprise the viewer either."

Just as the story of a film is ideally seen as a process, flexible and open to change and development, so too is the actual theme of *THE PATRIOT*, a theme which has always been present in Kluge's work but which has now become central: that of history (the German word *Geschichte* means both history and story). Here Kluge states his intention to challenge conventional notions of German history: "The printed words in the libraries are not history. The film politely passes over the unfortunate form which history assumes in the schoolroom—Gabi Teichert's everyday field. Which leaves the dead. They are history and they are not just simply dead. On this point, the knee of Stalingrad casualty Private First Class Wieland provides more detailed information. Several things in German history look quite different when seen from the point of view of the dead knee . . ."

Crucial to this revision of history is the concept of *Zusammenhang*, mysteriously untranslated in the English subtitles. In constructing a history, it is not just the dates and events which are important, but the way in which we chose to fit them together . . . The person who prepared the English subtitles for *THE PATRIOT* explains: "After reading through my English subtitle list for his most recent film, *THE PATRIOT*, Alexander Kluge requested that I not translate the word *Zusammenhang* . . . What, then, does it mean? *Zusammen*: together. *Hängen*: to adhere; to cling; to stick. *Zusammenhang*: the state of fitting together; context; association; continuity . . . The German system of order dictates how the world is perceived: in a reasonable, logical and orderly manner. And in showing us this limiting system, Kluge shows us the comic absurdity (and tragedy) of the attempt to turn the ongoing process of life and interpretation into stasis, to 'freeze' thought . . . Kluge dares in *THE PATRIOT* to develop the associational structure of the montage film to perhaps its furthest extreme. And, in so doing, he champions the notion of *Zusammenhang* as the formal principle behind his film. The viewer is compelled actively to participate in the film's structure—to engage his or her sense of wonder and openness—as documentary footage is mixed with fictional vignettes, text with graphics, colour with black-and-white film. Of course, such an associational and non-narrative approach toward film-making is not new to Kluge, having been explored by him as early as 1965 in his film *ABSCHIED VON GESTERN* (*YESTERDAY GIRL*). What is new, however, is the unity with which the thematic concerns of *Zusammenhang* in *THE PATRIOT* are linked so perfectly to his formal concerns as a film-maker, creating a film which, like its two protagonists, seeks—and achieves—a different 'sense of order'." (From *Kino: German Film 2/1980*.)

Sheila Johnston

RETROSPECTIVE: Five Buñuels

DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID (Le Journal d'une femme de chambre)

(January 29, 30)

Director: Luis Buñuel.

France/Italy, 1963.

Script: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière. Based on the novel by Octave Mirbeau.

Photography: Roger Fellous.

Leading Players: Jeanne Moreau (*Celestine*), Michel Piccoli (*M. Monteil*), Georges Géret (*Joseph*), François Lugagne (*Mme. Monteil*), Daniel Ivernel (*Captain Mauger*), Jean Ozenne (*M. Rabour*).

Black and white/Scope. French dialogue/English subtitles. Certificate X. 98 minutes.

Jeanne Moreau plays Celestine, the chambermaid of the title, whose role in the bourgeois household to which she is appointed becomes that of both observer and catalyst for the dormant tensions within. When Jean Renoir filmed the story in Hollywood in 1945, he set the action on the centenary of the French Revolution and thus gave the revolt of the servant classes against their masters an intimation of joy and affirmation shining through the cruelty and despair. Part of the darker colouring of Buñuel's adaptation stems from his setting of the tale in the late 1920s, where its brutality, casual violence and frank injustices seem to be harbingers of the violence to come.

When it first came out, the critical reception was rather muted. Truffaut, Godard, Antonioni, Chabrol, Fellini were all in full spate, and Buñuel's unfussy dramatics seemed a little conventional in the wake of the flourishes of the *Nouvelle Vague* and the excitement at early '60s Italian cinema. But it looks more potent now, a major film whose method owes nothing to modishness but has a steely grip that makes for arguably the most pessimistic film Buñuel had made since *LOS OLVIDADOS*. The upper classes are seen as devitalised and degenerate, the master using his position to seduce the maids under his charge (the horror of this is conveyed in a single close-up of the new maid's tearful face), the mistress's deep dissatisfaction represented by a fetish for cleanliness which, in her case, is clearly next to neurosis.

Unlike Renoir, however, Buñuel is equally critical of the servant classes, and the most substantial and complex relationship in the film is that between Celestine and the gamekeeper, Joseph. Celestine knows how to get on upstairs, how to manipulate her masters and calculate where the power lies, but the real concern in the

second part of the film is her attempt to incriminate the gamekeeper, whom she suspects has raped and killed a little girl.

The imagery might seem more subdued than is usual in Buñuel, but its cumulative effect is disturbing. The moment when a bee and a butterfly are blown off a flower by the blast of a shotgun is a profoundly suggestive image of the world of the film (the natural destroyed by the mechanical, the beautiful by the brutish). The rape scene gains its horror through suggestion rather than visual explicitness (a shot of a snail, a sustained tracking shot on Joseph as the idea gathers in his mind, a rustling of leaves, a shot of a boar). Maybe Buñuel's famed personal gentleness, like Coleridge's, explains his obsession with evil, his sense of its power, and his apprehension of the strength of truly unscrupulous characters. Celestine is a calculator and a schemer but she also has a rough sense of justice: Jeanne Moreau in the role is at her most magnificent. Joseph (splendidly played by Georges Géret) has some sense of propriety and puritanism, but there is also a barely contained savagery and it is clear that the age is going his way. "Vive Chiappe! Vive Chiappe!" he chants at the mysterious ending of the film. Chiappe was one of the key men responsible for the banning of Buñuel's *L'AGE D'OR*, and Buñuel's ending is an act of revenge but also a regretful historical hindsight. The golden age, the age of freedom was over: Fascism was on the march.

Neil Sinyard

EVIL EDEN (La Mort en ce jardin)

(February 18-20)

Director: Luis Buñuel.

France/Mexico, 1956.

Script: Luis Buñuel, Luis Alcoriza, Raymond Queneau. Based on the novel by José-André Lacour.

Photography: Jorge Stahl Jr.

Music: Paul Misraki.

Leading Players: Georges Marchal (*Chark*), Simone Signoret (*Gin*), Charles Vanel (*Castin*), Michèle Girardon (*Maria*), Michel Piccoli (*Father Lizzardi*).

Eastman Colour. French dialogue/English subtitles. Certificate X. 97 minutes. 16 mm. print.

A group of people in a diamond-prospecting village in an unnamed South American state escape from revolution and police oppression that was inadvertently sparked off by one of their

number, Chark, an adventurer. He is accompanied by an old prospector, Castin, and his deaf mute daughter Maria; Djin, a prostitute, and a missionary, Father Lizzardi. Adversity in the jungle brings them gradually together, until they come across the wreck of a crashed aeroplane, complete with food, clothes, jewellery, and corpses. Immediately the group breaks down into mutual antagonisms, leaving three dead. This conventional plot is subverted by surreal episodes like a postcard coming to life, and a dead snake being similarly animated by the ants that are eating it.

"The whole of *LA MORT EN CE JARDIN* is a veiled attack on Christianity, the church and its clergy. In it, Buñuel places the believer in such a predicament that under the pressure of his most vital, daily necessities his belief reveals itself to be an imposture. A religion that is based on the blackmail of divine grace is subjected to one of Buñuel's favourite disquisitive methods. Just as once you have removed an object's utilitarian relationship with its environment its latent reality emerges, so if you abolish social conventions and strip away the masks that are imposed on us by the comedy of human relations the characters suddenly reveal their genuine mentality. Crusoe on his island, the group of people in *LA MORT EN CE JARDIN* who have to hack their way through virgin forest, and the bourgeois in *THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL* who are trapped in their drawing-room have all been forced to come face to face with themselves. They have had to drop their intellectual and moral disguises and reveal themselves nakedly for what they are. This method results, of course, in a direct attack on the very *raison d'être* of our civilisation's masquerades, and especially that of the biggest sham of all: God.

"If the beginning of the story told in *LA MORT EN CE JARDIN* drags a little it is because Buñuel wants us to be perfectly acquainted with the men and women whose terrible trek through the jungle he then goes on to describe. One might very well suppose that the whole thing begins when a white cat pushes open a door and has a book flung at it by Chark. But in fact nothing either begins or ends in this film. Everything is transitory. God is but a transitory aspect of evil, and evil a fleeting guise of good, and it is no good referring to the tenets of classical morality. What may seem to be a crime can turn out to be a good deed, and vice versa. It is a film about ambiguity . . .

"*LA MORT EN CE JARDIN* is a film that makes the most thorough use of ambiguity because it is an accurate reflection of the way people hesitate, recoil from, and decide against certain acts, and then change their mind. But its fundamental meaning could not be clearer. Buñuel is once again pointing to the total pointlessness of Christian faith in adversity. Man can count only on himself in such situations; God, who is generally a cosy alibi, proves to be a useless hypothesis. Father Lizzardi is obviously the character who most interests Buñuel in *LA MORT EN CE JARDIN*. The director does not hate him because he is a priest, or because he has more or less been bribed by the financial powers that be. He simply watches him act, from the same humanist viewpoint he adopts in every film . . . For Buñuel, it is an incontrovertible fact that priests are men, and that in certain rare circumstances the man wearing the dog collar can act in a way which almost challenges the very vocation of priest, such as the Carmelites (enclosed nuns) who in a famous incident left their cloister to run to the help of the wounded, such as the worker-priests, or those who wish to get married, or those who take to the hills and fight alongside the guerrilleros. And Lizzardi does precisely this sort of thing: he needs to drink in order to quench his thirst, and the chalice is a suitable vessel; he needs to make a fire in order to warm himself, and the pages of the Bible are made of paper. I do not think that Buñuel had any blasphemous intentions here. He simply wanted to illustrate the vital demands of practical morality when they contrast with those of a mystifying morality . . ."

Freddy Buache/*The Cinema of Luis Buñuel*



THE MILKY WAY (La Voie Lactée)

(February 18-20)

Director: Luis Buñuel.

France, 1969.

Script: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière.

Photography: Christian Matras.

Leading Players: Paul Frankeur (*Pierre*), Laurent Terzieff (*Jean*), Alain Cuny (*Man in Cape*), Edith Scob (*Virgin Mary*), Bernard Verley (*Jesus*), François Maistre (*French Priest*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Certificate A. 98 minutes (cut from 102).

Made in 1968, Buñuel's heretical comedy, *THE MILKY WAY*, has been out of circulation for the last ten years, so the opportunity to see it should not be missed. Made after the huge success of *BELLE DE JOUR*, the film is a mischievous satire on Catholicism and moves fluidly between reality and fantasy, past and present, images which delight and those which disturb. Two tramps, whose pilgrimage to the shrine of Santiago di Compostella forms the backbone of the narrative, first meet a cloaked stranger who prophesies they will have children by a prostitute. Thereafter their journey is punctuated by a series of mysterious and outrageous encounters with zealots of the past, who together represent the prickly progress of the theological argument through the ages. "Everything in this film which concerns Catholicism and the heresies to which it has given rise," claims the film's end title, "particularly from the dogmatic point of view, is rigorously exact".

The film is perhaps too quirkily personal to have the resonance of the very best Buñuel. In comparison with the taut irony of *NAZARIN* and the controversially joyous blasphemy of *VIRIDIANA*, its critique seems somewhat specialised. God's designs might be "impenetrable", according to this film, but so are some of Buñuel's theological jokes.

Nevertheless, much of the film is very funny. In an inn, a priest argues about the doctrine of transubstantiation with an army officer and becomes so heated that he has to be carried out in a straitjacket. "You must have contradicted him", explains a policeman to the bewildered officer. A Jansenist argues with a Jesuit in a ferocious fencing duel, a literal rendering of the cut and thrust of religious debate and a hilarious homage to those screen swashbucklers who never stopped talking: prisoners of dogma rendered in the mode of *PRISONER OF ZENDA*. In general, *THE MILKY WAY* reveals Buñuel in a relaxed and genial vein, concerned less with protesting at the horrors of religious fanaticism than with amusing himself at the absurdities of doctrinal rigidity.

Neil Sinyard

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE (Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie)

(March 7-9)

Director: Luis Buñuel.

France, 1972.

Script: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière.

Photography: Edmond Richard.

Leading Players: Fernando Rey (*Ambassador*), Delphine Seyrig (*Simone Thénor*), Stéphane Audran (*Alice Sénéchal*), Jean-Pierre Cassel (*Sénéchal*), Paul Frankeur (*Thénor*), Claude Piéplu (*Colonel*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Certificate AA. 105 minutes.

With this brilliant comedy of manners and of malice, Buñuel's surrealism moves into a second phase. He is no longer endeavouring overtly to shock the bourgeoisie (which merely provokes outraged rejection): he is poisoning their food. Some critics, incredibly, thought the film demonstrated that Buñuel was growing soft in his old age. It actually shows that he is becoming more sly. The plot is a kind of cross between *DINNER AT EIGHT* and *AN INSPECTOR CALLS*. It indicates the complacent and irresponsible middle-classes through a series of

events involving interrupted meals and ghosts, all contained within a narrative structure that takes the form of a nightmare from which there is no escape. The unflappable style gives an additional comic dimension to the increasingly paranoid behaviour of the bourgeoisie of the title, whose suave social masks begin to slip under the pressure of events.

Buñuel's satirical sword is double-edged. It derides the rituals of the bourgeoisie by day and their fears by night. The film relishes their discomfort, and proposes that they are both corrupt and incorrigible. Their anxiety about their privileges—variously threatened through the film by the military, the police, the terrorist, the revolutionary—is exceeded only by their reluctance to surrender any of them. When the ambassador wakes from a disquieting dream, in which he has been shot by terrorists when reaching for an extra morsel of food and thus disclosing his hiding place, he makes immediately for the kitchen, proceeding to sit down and gorge himself anew. The gesture crystallises an instinctive acquisitiveness which no amount of persuasion or even subconscious foreboding could check. Whatever forces are thrown against them, the bourgeoisie will stick to the same road.

From about halfway, *DISCREET CHARM* moves into an extraordinary cycle of dream sequences, the transition from reality being in some cases almost imperceptible. The scenes reflect the inner unease of the bourgeoisie, a realisation and enactment of their most private fears. The conscious world they can control: the unconscious they cannot.

The dreams are of fundamental importance in the film and the answer perhaps to those critics who suggested that Buñuel is seduced by the bourgeoisie even whilst professing to despise them. It is not the bourgeoisie who charm Buñuel in this film: it is he who charms them. They are still the enemy but he has changed tactic and reckons he can get further by not openly offending their values but by suavely reproducing their surface polish and style whilst jabbing subterraneously (and surrealistically) at their insecurity and guilt. In comparison with the blunt methods of his earlier films, the film offers a more glittering and insinuating attack on cherished targets: the Church, the State, bourgeois morality. It has the civilised sheen of a work like Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, which is also funny, also about eating things, and also quite deadly in its inverted social attack. It even has the gloss and oblique intelligence of your typical 'art house' movie, except that Buñuel is mocking some of the trademarks of noted 'art film' practitioners (the meals of Chabrol, the temporal disjunctions of Resnais) as well as delighting in disruptions of continuity that pull the rug from under certain conventions of 'bourgeois' film-making. Buñuel might have become a classic, but he has not been tamed.

Neil Sinyard

THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY (Le Fantôme de la Liberté)

(March 7-9)

Director: Luis Buñuel.

France, 1974.

Script: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière.

Photography: Edmond Richard.

Leading Players: Bernard Verley (*Captain of Dragoons*), Maxence Mailfort (*Lt. of Dragoons*), Muni (*Nursemaid*), Philippe Brigaud (*Sinister Stranger*), I Carrière (*Veronique Foucauld*), Jean-Claude Brialy (*M. Foucauld*), Monica Vitti (*Mme. Foucauld*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Certificate X. 104 minutes.

A mother and father insist that their child has disappeared, despite the girl's own insistence to them that she has not. A child is given some rude pictures in a park and has them swiftly confiscated by her disapproving but strangely excited parents: they turn out to be pictures of French tourist attractions. People go to the toilet in public and eat in guilty privacy. Buñuel's *THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY* is a series of pointed reversals of expectations which contribute to an examination of the relativity of social norms and values. It is a bracing surrealist comedy and a relaxed variation on the themes of a lifetime, with ideas

and images that are both fresh in context and yet strike sparks across Buñuel's entire career (from *CHIEN ANDALOU* through *LOS OLVIDADOS* and *THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL* to *TRISTANA*).

"Through surrealism I realised for the first time that man isn't free," Buñuel has said. "I believe in the total liberty of man but surrealism showed me a discipline to follow." Surrealism and discipline: one of the richest paradoxes of Buñuel's career has been a vision of life that tends to anarchy and a visual style that is a model of disciplined economy. Moving a glass-cased spider next to the clock on the mantle-piece, Jean-Claude Brialy in this film declares: "I'm fed up with symmetry". Buñuel hates the symmetry of life, but he loves the symmetry of cinema. The film might seem a free-wheeling survey of mindless or malevolent eccentricity, but it is tightly framed, propelled with a subtle narrative sense and brilliantly held together by the *leitmotif* of authoritarian absurdity, be it the authority of parent over child, captor over captive, murderer over victim, lecturer over audience, doctor over patient.

The thematic consistency of the film is contained in the ambiguous title. On the one hand, it is a summary of a key Buñuel theme: liberty as a phantom, as something intangible, always beyond our grasp and yet a haunting ideal that must always be pursued. Yet liberty is a phantom in another sense: a ghost, something terrifying from which people flee. Fearing to be in charge of their own destiny and their own feelings, people become slaves of social custom, and of the



roles which uniform (and uniformity) demand, seeing without observing, acting out of convention rather than conviction. The ostrich, that is a recurrent symbol in the film and that stares balefully out at the camera in the film's last shot, might be Buñuel's most impudent and scornful image for a humanity with a tragic tendency to bury its head in the sand.

Neil Sinyard

1 + 1 = 3

(January 31 - February 2)

Director: Heidi Genée.

West Germany, 1979.

Script: Heidi Genée.

Photography: Gernot Roll, Bernd Elstner.

Music: Andreas Köbner.

Leading Players: Adelheid Arndt (*Katarina Arendt*), Dominik Graf (*Bernhard Grabowski*), Christoph Quest (*Jürgen Wieland*), Helga Störck (*Anna*), Dietrich Leiding (*Robert*), Charlotte Witthauer (*Jürgen's Mother*).

Colour. English subtitles. Certificate AA. 85 minutes.

The New German Cinema has not so far been very notable for its gaiety. It has been mostly preoccupied with the more sombre themes of recent German history: the growth of fascism (both before the Second World War and in the last decade), the social and cultural implications of the so-called 'economic miracle' in the post-war reconstruction of Germany, the increasing polarisation of Left and Right during the 'sixties', which led up to the bloody events of the 'seventies' (such as the killing of Hans-Martin Schleyer and the prison 'suicides' of Andreas Baader and Gudrun Esslin). Such themes were treated in films



like *SHIRIN'S WEDDING*, *THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN*, *THE TIN DRUM*, *GERMANY IN AUTUMN* and *KNIFE IN THE HEAD*. Other concerns emerged too: Herzog spoke of the outsider in *KASPAR HAUSER* and of imperialism in *FATA MORGANA* and *AGUIRRE, WRATH OF GOD*; Fassbinder of sexuality and oppression in *THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT* and *FOX*; Helke Sander of women's oppression in *ALL-ROUND REDUCED PERSONALITY* and, more recently, of the growth and development of feminist politics during the last decade in *THE SUBJECTIVE FACTOR*. The list is a long one—too long to recite here. All have contributed to a cinema which has added crucially to our understanding of vital contemporary issues, not just as they affect Germany (though this has been the films' main concern) but also in the world at large. If this cinema has at times appeared introverted and gloomy (and *fun* it has, on the whole, not been) it has been of very great value in that its makers have put back into a relatively popular form of cinema—the takings on *THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN*, for instance, broke box-office records at some cinemas—a questioning, if not always radical politics that had not existed in the German cinema for many years, if indeed it has existed to a comparable degree in any other national cinema in post-war Europe.

During the past two years the world-wide economic recession has bitten very deep. It is significant that film distributors are now finding that what sells best is comedy. People want to laugh, and 'escapism' is big on the market (e.g. *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, *NINE TO FIVE*, *PRIVATE BENJAMIN*, *GREGORY'S GIRL*). Something interesting is also happening in the German cinema. In the past eighteen months two comedies have appeared: '*1 + 1 = 3*' and *TAXI ZUM KLO*. Both deal with subjects that have already been much covered (by Fassbinder, by Sanders-Brahms, by Sander); the first is about a feminist woman, the second about gay men. Neither film mocks its subjects, but both are *funny*. '*1 + 1 = 3*' (which we are showing in double-bill with *WIVES*) is about a young actress, Katarina Arendt, who discovers that she is pregnant and decides against an abortion. She sees the disasters of her sister's marriage (jealous husband, recurring pregnancy) and decides that this is not for her: she will go it alone, regardless of the baby's father Bernhard's desire to 'regularise' the position and of her subsequent lover Jürgen's possessive longing for a child. The film is warmly affectionate in its portrayal of the ups and downs of everyday life, as it is in its examination of people—women, men and children—but it never wavers in its feminist commitment to Katarina (a lovely performance by Adelheid Arndt in the main role).

So what is happening? '*1 + 1 = 3*' is by no means an 'escapist' fantasy (nor, for that matter, is *GREGORY'S GIRL*, which I have perhaps unfairly placed in that category, although it *is* a fantasy). Heidi Genée has made a film in which a feminist politics is taken for granted and absorbed into the comic fabric of plot and narrative, without for a moment losing the acerbic view of sexual and social relations which such a politics engenders and sustains. I don't think that one

could argue that '*1 + 1 = 3*' is a particularly powerful of passionately memorable film: but then it does not set out to be one. What it represents is a move forward by a radical filmmaker into a popular genre that is all too frequently reactionary (see *PRIVATE BENJAMIN* and *NINE TO FIVE*, for the two most depressing recent co-optations of 'feminism' into mainstream cinema); what '*1 + 1 = 3*' is, is a delightfully funny look at one woman's struggle for independence.

Marion Doyen

WIVES (HUSTRUER) (January 31—February 2)

Director: Anja Breien.
Norway, 1975.

Script: Anjan Breien and the cast.

Photography: Halvor Naess.

Music: Finn Ludt.

Leading Players: Anne Marie Ottersen (*Mie Jacobsen*), Frøydis Armand (*Heidrun Iverson*), Katja Medbøe (*Kaja Quist*), Nøste Schwab (*Kaja's Mother*).

Colour. English subtitles. Certificate X. 84 minutes.

Inspired by Cassavetes's *HUSBANDS*, *WIVES* is a delightful, constantly surprising and extremely entertaining film by one of Norway's few female directors, Anja Breien. It concerns three former schoolfriends, now married and in their late twenties, who meet again at a school reunion party and decide to prolong their fiesta for a while. Forgetting their husbands and families, leaving their everyday existence behind, they journey through Oslo (cadging money, getting picked up in a bar by a couple of commercial photographers of dubious intention) and make an overnight trip to Copenhagen. Partly improvised, the film has a rare authenticity and scenes of great humour and human warmth.

THE CONSTANT FACTOR (Constans)

(February 4—6)

Director: Krzysztof Zanussi.
Poland, 1980.

Script: Krzysztof Zanussi.

Photography: Sławomir Idziak.

Music: Wojciech Kilar.

Leading Players: Tadeusz Bradecki (*Witold Partyka*), Zofia Mrozowska (*Witold's Mother*), Małgorzata Zajączkowska (*Grazyna*), Cezary Morawski (*Stefan*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Certificate A. 91 mins.

Although Krzysztof Zanussi is regarded by many critics as the most important contemporary Polish film-maker apart from Andrzej Wajda, very few of his films have received commercial distribution in Britain. In an article published in *Film*

Comment (September-October 1980), Peter Cowie suggests that perhaps the reason for this neglect has to do with Zanussi's ambitious attempts to examine complex moral and philosophical issues 'with mathematical rigour'. Zanussi was in fact a scientist before he became a film-maker, and his severest critics would argue that his skills as the latter don't yet match his intellectual ambitions. Cowie takes a much kinder view, making comparisons with Ingmar Bergman and arguing, simply, that Zanussi has yet to fully establish his reputation and gain a large audience for his work. *THE CONSTANT FACTOR*, which won the Best Director Award at Cannes in 1980, goes some considerable way towards achieving that goal. Here, as Cowie has noted, 'Zanussi is able to shape individual characters as skilfully as he can enunciate ideas' and 'the direction is so seamless that one is scarcely aware of the devices to which other film-makers habitually resort, such as the zoom lens, the subjective sound effect, or a florid style of acting'.

'The film', says Zanussi, 'tells the story of the price that a man has to pay to feel free'. As in many of the director's earlier films, the chief protagonist, Witold, is a young intellectual who is deeply marked by his family background and is frustrated in various ways from achieving his ambitions. Like his father who died in a climbing accident, Witold is a keen mountaineer who is unable to study or travel because of financial problems. His father's influential friends find him a job with a firm organising exhibitions, which means regular trips abroad. But Witold is appalled by the corruption and cheating of both his colleagues and the hospital staff who refuse to allocate his sick mother to a ward. He finally loses both his mother and his job and ends up as a window-washer who, at the end of the film, seems fated to experience another misfortune.

It is interesting that, despite the award at Cannes, the release of *THE CONSTANT FACTOR* was delayed in Britain to coincide with the recent upsurge of interest in Polish events. Most British critics have read the film as a scathing critique of corruption in Polish society, and the distributors made explicit links between the film and Solidarity in their advertising. But the work itself, while obviously lending itself to this kind of treatment, cannot simply be reduced to a sloganising message. An extract from John Pym's perceptive review in the *Monthly Film Bulletin* should demonstrate why:

'...Although Witold's predicament is largely occasioned by his inability to accommodate himself to small-scale corruption—and in this sense the film is dryly critical of Polish middle management—this is only half the story. And really, one feels, for Zanussi the less important half....Witold's dilemma is at heart spiritual. References to chance thread through the film: Witold's grandfather was killed by chance during the war; his father on a mountaineering expedition; Witold finds himself employed by chance; the child at the end is killed by ill-fortune (though fate is left in doubt, since the scene is abruptly cut off). Chance has nothing to do with mathematics (read, survival); and yet chance seems to rule our lives. Zanussi goes further, to suggest that we have precious little free will: Witold is trapped in his destiny very much as the incongruous macaw is trapped in the car which he passes on a night-time street in Germany. (The film as a whole has a vivid and often surprising visual intensity, reminiscent more of Zanussi's *FAMILY LIFE* than such recent work as *CAMOUFLAGE*). Even if Witold had been able to bribe the doctor, with hard foreign cash, into moving his dying mother from a hospital corridor into a ward, she would still have died; the purpose of her working life, as a small-time dispensing chemist, in a sense cruelly negated by her end. Zanussi's style, which depends on allusive juxtaposition, is deployed with economic effect. The brief Bombay sequence, for example, exactly conveys the impact of a strange, bright country on an outsider conditioned by drabness and sustained by rarefied spiritual bodily exercise (earlier we have seen him jump in ecstasy from an aeroplane). He weeps—in incomprehension, it seems—as the family of a beautiful young woman calmly light her pyre. The scene ends before it has begun, and that too, perhaps, is part of Zanussi's political, pontifical moral: the 'constant' of existence is its very inconstancy.'

LOOKING AT PROSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution recently re-emerged as an 'issue' with the case of the Yorkshire Ripper. During the course of the trial, the fate of the victims who were not prostitutes aroused particular distress—as if in their case it was somehow less deserved: as if the other women were of tainted innocence.

The common view of prostitution places such women outside the normal and legitimised area of marriage, the family and femininity; this attitude finds affirmation within the law. Films such as *PROSTITUTE, A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB*, *TAKING A PART* and *BROTHERS AND SISTERS* challenge this position; significantly they were all produced from the 'independent' sector of British film-making.

As a marginal area of social exchange, prostitution nevertheless embodies classic assumptions about women's sexual and economic status. The effect of criminalisation, whereby prostitutes are always placed apart, helps to obscure the view that the so-called normal demand of womanhood is to relinquish sexual autonomy for financial security and social acceptance. We hope that in a truly socialist society the need for prostitution would die away and that reconstituted political, social and economic structures would be accompanied by a transformation in the structures of the psyche—fundamentally the male psyche. Patriarchy evidently fosters a split between what Freud has called the 'affectionate' and 'sensual' currents of sexuality. Referring to a certain category of male patient, he wrote:

'The whole sphere of love in such people remains divided in the two directions personified in art and sacred and profane (or animal) love. Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love'. ('On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love').

Neurotics may exhibit this split in particular and dramatic ways, but in more muted form, this dilemma of masculine desire is widely present. In cinema, where looking is said to take the place of touching, the theme of prostitution is almost an obsession.

In the films of classic Hollywood, represented in this season by *CAMILLE* and *THE REVOLT OF MAMIE STOVER*, prostitution was not explicitly referred to. The Production Code (also known as the Hays Code), which came into force in America between 1933 and 1934, instituted a kind of censorship, imposing standards and guidelines for the content of films. Reflecting self-righteous notions of 'decency', the Code prescribed what was sexually acceptable on the screen. In its terms, 'night-club hostess' was the equivalent of 'prostitute'.

In her article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (*Screen*, Vol. 16, No. 3), Laura Mulvey has written of classic Hollywood cinema: 'Unchallenged, mainstream film coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order'.

In *CAMILLE* and *MAMIE STOVER*, the central female characters (played by Greta Garbo and Jane Russell respectively) are objects of exchange in the circulation of money, and both are finally defined—and trapped—in relation to opposing (some might say, 'complementary') images of the whore and the 'good woman'. Mamie, for example, excessive and flamboyant, whose dyed red hair earns her the title 'Flaming Mamie', is contrasted to Annalee ('Miss Hill-top'), who, demure and confident, is secure in her respectability. (She usually wears white—sometimes trimmed with red to signify a

hint of sexuality.) In *CAMILLE* Greta Garbo/Marguerite is split around the image of the 'fallen woman' of the city and the wholesomeness of the country girl. In both films, the patriarchal discourse is driven to maintain the prostitute as forever marginal, for she threatens to reveal the truth of male desire (ultimately incestuous and castrating). For both characters the image of the prostitute cannot be transcended, and the possibility of social acceptance is fixed beyond their reach.

KLUTE and *PRETTY BABY*, though marked by affinities to European art cinema, are the products of contemporary Hollywood. In the terms of modern, liberal sensibility, prostitution is no longer such a 'shocking' subject. These films show the whore as redeemable to mainstream society—though men who need to 'rescue' in this way are of a type that was also known to Freud. However, the central characters of *KLUTE* and *PRETTY BABY* differ significantly from their earlier counterparts: prostitution for them is not so financially rewarding. Since money is said to symbolise phallic power, both Mamie Stover and Marguerite Gautier represent a further threat: consequently, their destruction is all the more imperative.

Made in the wake of the Women's Movement, *TAKING A PART*, *A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB*, *BROTHERS AND SISTERS* and *PROSTITUTE* are concerned to re-contextualise prostitution. While none of these films repeats or re-circulates patriarchal imagery of prostitution, both *BROTHERS AND SISTERS* and *PROSTITUTE* are reluctant to confront that imagery. Is it significant that these films were made by men?

LECTURE/DISCUSSION

This introduction, and the notes that follow, were written by Marion Dain, who will be at the Lab on February 21 for a lecture and discussion on the subject of Prostitution in film. The lecture will follow the screening at 3.00 p.m. of *TAKING A PART* and *A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB*, and will take place in the cinema.



CAMILLE

(February 7)

Director: George Cukor.
U.S.A., 1937.

Script: Zoe Atkins, Frances Marion, James Hilton. Based on the novel and play *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas the younger. **Photography:** William Daniels, Karl Freund. **Art Directors:** Cedric Gibbons, Frederic Hope. **Leading Players:** Greta Garbo (*Marguerite Gauthier*), Robert Taylor (*Armand Duval*), Lionel Barrymore (*General Duval*), Henry Daniell (*Baron de Barville*).

Black and white. Certificate A. 109 minutes.

A symmetrically structured film turning on the opposition between relationships based on financial gain and those in which love is given selflessly and freely. *CAMILLE* is obsessed with money. Fundamentally it is the sentimental tale of Marguerite Gauthier, a poor but beautiful country girl turned courtesan in *fin-de-siècle* Paris. Armand Duval is the man she loves: "I never thought a good man could be so handsome", but the wealthy Baron is the one she chooses. Craving beautiful things, she is reluctant to abandon luxury merely for love. (Her extravagance and self-indulgence are symbolised by the camélias she loves to wear.) But Armand keeps returning and each time the impossibility of their love is played out. At last she decides to break with the baron, who after settling her bills, supposedly for the last time, slaps her viciously across the face.

In the country with Armand she flourishes. Ever generous, she sells some jewellery to provide a fine wedding for a friend from the days when she worked in a Paris dress shop. The friend, poor but respectable, is marrying for love. But the future is paved with sacrifice and humiliation. Marguerite endures it all for love of Armand. They are finally reunited when Marguerite, having coughed discreetly throughout the film, dies in his arms.

The central problem of the film is that it needs to rescue Marguerite as an appropriate Romantic heroine at the same time as depicting her as a courtesan. In order to do this an elaborate system of values is brought into play in which attitudes to money and the dichotomy of town and country become the standards by which all the characters are measured. Other Parisian courtesans like Prudence and Olympe, are shown as avaricious and calculating; they are strongly contrasted with idealistic characters like Armand, who is associated visually with the wholesome values of country life and whose loyalty cannot be bought. Like Prudence and Olympe, Marguerite desires the wealth and luxury that the city can provide, but her grace and generosity separate her from the greed of other courtesans. Her ability to thrive in the country, having renounced city decadence, redeems her for us.

It is a measure of the sophistication of classic Hollywood cinema and its sheer power of spectacle, centring in this instance on the face and figure of Garbo, that Marguerite can be identified with two contradictory worlds—one good one venal—and still emerge as a great Romantic heroine of the cinema.



THE REVOLT OF MAMIE STOVER

(February 13)

Director: Raoul Walsh.
U.S.A., 1956.

Script: Sydney Boehm. Based on the novel by William Bradford Huie. **Photography:** Leo Tover. **Music:** Hugo Friedhofer. **Leading Players:** Jane Russell (*Mamie Stover*), Richard Egan (*Jim*), Joan Leslie (*Annalee*), Angus Moorehead (*Bertha Parchman*). **Eastman Colour/Scope. Certificate A. 86 minutes. 16 mm. print.**

It is 1941. The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour is soon to draw the U.S. into World War Two. Mamie Stover—voluptuous and insolent—already has a reputation for trouble. In the film's opening sequence, as she leaves the U.S. mainland to work as a nightclub hostess in Hawaii, the look she gives directly into camera marks her as transgressive and defiant of the codes of representation.

Revolting against her 'birthright' at the bottom of the heap, Mamie is determined to capitalise on the only asset she has—her looks. She dreams of getting rich and returning home to flaunt her money. On meeting Jimmy, however, her ambition becomes more complicated. He is a writer, urbane and wealthy. He inhabits the world of social respectability and Mamie sets out to win his love and the desirable social status that would bring.

Although the film never refers explicitly to prostitution and although the Bungalow is only an exotic nightclub, the role of the hostesses is, nevertheless, to perform as objects for exchange. "Smile ladies!" exhorts Bertha, owner of the club, "Smiles mean money!". Mamie uses hers to buy up real estate, her biggest tenant being the U.S. Army. But she is caught up in a paradox: by seeking to transform her status, she compounds a highly fetishised image for herself. At the same time that this is sexually exciting ("Fellas who try to resist/Oughta hire a psychiatrist" claims the song), it is also the subject of disavowal and taboo: "Keep your eyes on the hands", says Mamie's cabaret number, "they tell the story". But the story falls foul of the myths embedded in her image. Though organised predominantly from her point of view, the narrative is constrained by these myths—the adventuress, whore, vamp and pin-up—which are returned to Mamie via Jimmy's friends, his servant, the Army captain who gives her golf lessons and, ironically, by her own refusal to abandon economic independence. The narrative structure shifts away from her when she breaks her promise to Jimmy to give up her job and, by implication, cease dealing in real estate.

With the outbreak of war, he is conscripted overseas. In his absence, and commanding even greater fees from the Bungalow, Mamie is able to take advantage of the situation of national emergency and increase her economic power dramatically: she buys up so much property rendered cheap by the war that she could almost gain control of the whole island's system of exchange. For this she is accused of 'hoarding'.

Ultimately, the tension between her image and her story cannot be sustained: her revolt against the conventions of representation prove futile. In the final sequence, reminiscent of the opening, she returns to America. Now she no longer looks to the camera, for this time she is trapped within the space allotted to her by the film.

KLUTE

(14 February)

Director: Alan J. Pakula.
U.S.A., 1971.

Script: Andy K. Lewis, Dave Lewis. **Photography:** Gordon Willis. **Music:** Michael Small.

Leading Players: Jane Fonda (*Bree Daniel*), Donald Sutherland (*John Klute*), Charles Cioffi (*Cable*), Roy Scheider (*Frank Ligourin*), Dorothy Tristan (*Arlyn Page*). **Technicolor. Certificate X. 114 minutes.**

An example of 'New American Cinema' offering a complicated thriller plot and an apparently 'liberated' heroine. Linking themes of prostitution and psychotherapy in a serious and 'sensitive' way, *KLUTE* can also be related to the humanist, realist tradition of European art cinema.

The film first sets up prostitution as another option in marketing the female sexual image. Helped by Jane Fonda's public image as the 'liberated woman', Bree Daniel initially appears as a working girl trying to survive independently in the city. We first see her—totally objectified—taking part in a model line-up. She then tries for the theatre—and the director makes it plain that in exchange for his help, he expects to go to bed with her. In the absence of other work, prostitution supplies an income. The scene with the client and the faked orgasm shows her in full command, though simultaneously uninvolved, her mind elsewhere. We see that she dissociates herself from her activities as a prostitute, and soon afterwards are offered insight into the 'real' woman as we watch her spend an evening at home. There is a fascination present in this treatment of a woman alone, without a man to perform for, but ultimately the meaning of the sequence is to reduce her independence to loneliness, insecurity and vulnerability.

The ground is now prepared for the psychotherapy sessions in which we learn that Bree regards her prostitution as a sickness. Her changeability of temperament shores up the image of a neurotic personality shaped by the stress of urban life.

Klute emerges as a would-be saviour. Silently he takes her over, his gaze relentlessly appropriating her. In offering Bree the chance to give it all up and live in the country, he represents the way of reconstituting the sexuality alienated from her by modern society. Bree's scepticism ('he's not the right man') merely compounds the idea that the 'solution' to prostitution lies in personal relationships. Questions of the socio-economic structures which make the female sexual image a saleable commodity and which force women into marginal positions in the



PRETTY BABY

(17, 19—20 February)

Director: Louis Malle.
U.S.A., 1977.

Script: Polly Platt, adapted by Polly Platt and Louis Malle from *Storyville, New Orleans* by Al Rose.

Photography: Sven Nykvist.

Music: Various, including Jelly Roll Morton, Scott Joplin, Mamie Desmond.

Leading players: Brooke Shields (*Violet*), Susan Sarandon (*Hildegard Marr—'Hattie'*), Keith Carradine (*Monsieur Bellocq—'Papa'*), Frances Faye (*Madame Nell Livingston*).

Metrocolor. Certificate X. 109 minutes (cut from 110 minutes).

An example of New Hollywood Cinema that is effectively a European Art movie: easy to watch, it manages to sanitise and neutralise a potentially disturbing tale.

Operating like a series of tableaux, the plot lacks a strong narrative drive. The setting is a comfortable New Orleans brothel in the early years of this century. Brooke Shields/*Violet* has been born and bred into this milieu, her mother being one of the many beautiful prostitutes resident there. However, the popular ambition of the women is to find a client who will marry them and carry them off to respectability before their looks fade. *Bellocq*, a young photographer, arrives on the scene. Life trundles on until the day when *Violet* is initiated into prostitution. Scarcely twelve years old, she is ritualistically displayed and auctioned off to the highest bidder.

Hattie, her mother, has meanwhile found a man to marry: she takes her leave of the brothel, promising to return for *Violet*. Left to fend for herself, *Violet* develops a relationship with *Bellocq*, having followed him from the brothel to his house. Kindly and protective, his initial paternal response gives way to more orthodox heterosexual desire. He marries her. Shortly afterwards *Hattie* returns and *Violet* is reclaimed for childhood.

This film tries to have its cake and eat it. While appearing to offer an inside view of brothel life, the images of feminine intimacy, the easy sensuality of the women alone, often in a state of glamorous undress, are there to gratify our sexual fantasies.

Through the device of the male photographer the film claims to point up its own voyeurism. But this does not problematise the spectacle of

the brothel: his work merely provides another source of untroubled pleasure in a series of erotic tableaux.

PROSTITUTE

(February 21-23)

Director: Tony Garnett.
Great Britain, 1980.

Script: Tony Garnett.

Photography: Charles Stewart, Diane Tammes.

Music: The Gangsters.

Leading Players: Eleanor Forsythe (*Sandra*), Kate Crutchley (*Louise*), Kim Lockett (*Jean*), Nancy Samuels (*Rose Wilson*), Richard Mangan (*David Selby*).

Technicolour. Certificate X. 97 minutes (cut from 98).

PROSTITUTE is a further example of the cinematic naturalism for which Kestrel Films is known. As such, it contains the same strengths and weaknesses as its predecessors, with highest marks awarded for commitment. Garnett admits that the film was motivated chiefly by his curiosity, but it took a full four years to research and, undeniably, his work has proved thorough, honest and lacking in sensationalism. In his own words, it is "... the most unerotic film imaginable."

To say that cinema is fascinated by prostitution is nothing new. The image of the prostitute is the locus of a multitude of patriarchal myths round female sexuality—these myths and images being the source of cinema's fascination. I therefore find it odd, to say the least, that a film entitled 'Prostitute' does not refer to the representation of prostitution. It is as though de-mystification of the image could be achieved by overlooking it and looking instead at what 'really' is involved.

In fact, the film is a vehicle to argue for a change in the current law on prostitution and was made with the help of PROS (Programme for the reform of the law on soliciting)—an organisation that represents street prostitutes. *Sandra*, a Birmingham prostitute, goes to London in search of a better living. Meantime, her close friend, a social worker, tries to co-ordinate a pressure group of local prostitutes in Birmingham. As in *A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB*, prostitution is seen as another way for working-class women to make a living.

We see what happens in a massage parlour.

(Kissing on the mouth is not advised—you might get home and want to kiss the kids.) We are shown the prosecution of a streetwalker arrested by the police, and in charting *Sandra's* experience of doing her job in London, the film clearly illustrates the necessity for de-criminalisation. The hazards of the job are conveyed without resorting to spectacle, titillation or pandering to our voyeuristic impulses, and as a campaign film, *PROSTITUTE* is to be welcomed.

A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB

(February 21)

Directors: Jackie Gastin, Delyse Hawkins.

Great Britain, 1978.

Black and white. Uncertificated. 40 minutes. 16 mm.

Another documentary made on a low student budget, this time at the London College of Printing, *A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB* is structured around a series of interviews. In common with *TAKING A PART* it calls for an end to the marginalised status of prostitution. Otherwise, it addresses, almost exclusively, the problems arising for women—especially working-class women—who see prostitution as a legitimate alternative to other ways of earning a living. One interviewee, an actress, prefers to subsidise her work in fringe theatre by prostitution rather than casual cleaning, for example. Not only is it better paid, but to her it is less demanding.

The film emphasises the difficulties, danger and injustice that accompany prostitution in the light of the law as it now stands. The central contradiction hinges on the freedom of men to offer women money for sex, while women who offer sex for money may be fined or imprisoned. Moreover, the threat of physical violence is present—not only from the clients but also from the police.

The women argue that prostitution fulfils a necessary social service, providing in some instances a therapeutic outlet for mental problems. For this reason they believe that the law should be changed in their favour. They want public recognition for the work they do and to this end urge all prostitutes to become organised.

Three of the women involved in this film were already members of PROS, and on the film's completion the organisation bought a print for use in its campaign. Fearing prosecution for their members in the film, PROS initially asked that their permission should be sought for all screenings and that the film should have non-theatrical distribution only (i.e. be screened under club regulations). Currently, the situation seems more relaxed and prosecution in this instance now appears remote.

It is worth noting that Tony Garnett viewed *A PARTICULAR KIND OF JOB* whilst researching for *PROSTITUTE*.

TAKING A PART

(February 21)

Director: Jan Worth.

Great Britain, 1979.

Photography: Jan Worth, Anne Cottringer.

Featuring: Lucy, Debbie, Jan Worth.

Colour. Uncertificated. 46 minutes. 16 mm.

Made on a student budget at the Royal College of Art, *TAKING A PART* is a documentary not so much about prostitution as about the lives of two young women, Debbie and Lucy. Both have experience of prostitution; one decides to give it up, the other probably never will.

Most of the film is in medium shot, often with Debbie or Lucy reading the script aloud to camera. They have, in fact, written this script themselves, albeit in co-operation with the director. Shots of rough working notes showing excisions, alterations etc. indicate that their performances are the rehearsed accounts of selected passages from their own lives. Together with a strategy of long takes, often punctuated by 'Cut' and 'Action', this serves to foreground the constructed nature of the film, emphasising in particular the director's interventions.

This is not to make a point about form-for-form's sake, for simultaneously the film demonstrates *what* is being constructed. We see the issue of prostitution retrieved into a context that includes family backgrounds, current struggles for decent housing, the problems facing

a single mother, personal relationships and hopes for the future. In focusing on financial insecurity, the film emphasises the role of economic pressure in Debbie's and Lucy's attitudes to prostitution. The role of fantasy, too, is examined. Advertising images from magazines and the setting of a luxury furniture store show how Lucy in particular formed her expectations of a lifestyle. However, neither she nor Debbie are victims of fantasy: each is shown to have a realistic understanding of the decisions she has made.

Only rarely are they filmed in personalised surroundings; this contributes to the distancing effect of the camera strategies. The overall effect ensures that *TAKING A PART* avoids the pitfalls of the conventional documentary; Debbie and Lucy cannot be fixed as sociological oddities and prostitution achieves a re-definition that, uncomfortably for US, brings it in from the cold.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

(February 21—23)

Director: Richard Woolley.
Great Britain, 1980.

Script: Richard Woolley, Tammy Walker. Based on an original screenplay by Richard Woolley.
Photography: Pascoe Macfarlane.
Music: Trevor Jones.

Leading Players: Sam Dale (David Barratt), Carolyn Pickles (Theresa Bennett/Jennifer Collins), Jenifer Armitage (Patricia Snow), Robert East (James Barratt), Elizabeth Bennett (Sarah Barratt), Barry McCarthy (Pete Gibson).
Colour. Certificate AA. 101 minutes.

In a Northern city a prostitute is murdered on the night of November 1st. One man killed her but, according to the poster, "all men are guilty". A film that loudly echoes the case of the Yorkshire Ripper.

Adopting elements of the thriller format, *BROTHERS AND SISTERS* charts the events leading up to the murder of Jennifer Collins. In parallel, events are unravelled that surround the murder. We have to decide in what ways these are significant.

The Barratt brothers, David and James, are not as different as they seem. Unscrupulous where women are concerned, they share the oldest kind of comradeship in the world. Where were they at the time of the murder?

David, a left-wing social worker, shares a collective house with three others near the spot where Jennifer was killed. Firmly committed to political change at work and on the economic front, his personal life is marked by contradiction. Happy to moralise about Women's Oppression, he keeps his affair with Theresa, nanny to James's family and sister of the murdered woman, a secret from Tricia, his long-standing girlfriend at the house. James, a career officer in the army, is secure in his identity as a white, ruling-class male. While David evidently wants to break with this background, in the light of his affair with Theresa his politics are reduced virtually to hypocrisy, especially when James, uncomplicated, reactionary and oblivious to his wife's sexual needs, admits to deceiving her with prostitutes. But could this duplicity, on either part, extend to murder?

BROTHERS AND SISTERS is predominantly a film about male attitudes to women. The figure of a murdered prostitute is the apogee of female oppression. David and James play out different facets of the stereotyped patriarch—herein lie some problems.

1. The situations they convey are well-observed and plausible, but the combination of rich and sensual photography with dialogue that is sometimes over-written and didactic, makes the representation less than convincing. In nearly all the domestic scenarios the film falls between two stools: distanciation and identification. Its political lessons are therefore easy to refuse.

2. In the sequences involving Jennifer Collins we are thoroughly engaged. Using the devices of a conventional thriller (e.g., 'false' point-of-view shots), it manipulates us into asking when/how will she be killed. For the moment, 'who' seems less important.

3. The film allows the Barratt brothers a circumstantial possibility of committing the crime. But they exist within a filmic space so different from Jennifer's that unless we already believe that murder is a corollary of their behaviour, it



provides no further compelling reason to suspect them.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, is important partly because it tries to account for a woman's murder in terms that exceed the mental sickness of an individual. To say that all men are implicated in patriarchy is one thing; to say that all men are prone to patriarchy's violent excesses is quite another. For me the central problem is that it seeks to conflate the two.

CITIZENS BAND

(February 11-16)

Director: Jonathan Demme.
U.S.A., 1977.

Script: Paul Brickman.
Photography: Jordan Cronenweth.
Music: Bill Conti.

Leading Players: Paul Le Mat (Blain Lovejoy, 'Spider'), Candy Clark (Pam, 'Electra'), Ann Wedgeworth (Joyce Rissley, 'Dallas Angel'), Marcia Rodd (Connie Rissley, 'Portland Angel'), Charles Napier (Harold Rissley, 'Chrome Angel'), Roberts Blossom ('Papa Thermodyne').
Colour. Certificate AA. 98 minutes.

One of the highlights of the last programme was a short season of films directed by Jonathan Demme, including the marvellous MELVIN AND HOWARD. His earlier, ill-fated comedy CITIZENS BAND proved to be unavailable for the season but has since been released in Britain (partly, no doubt, because of the current interest here in CB radio).

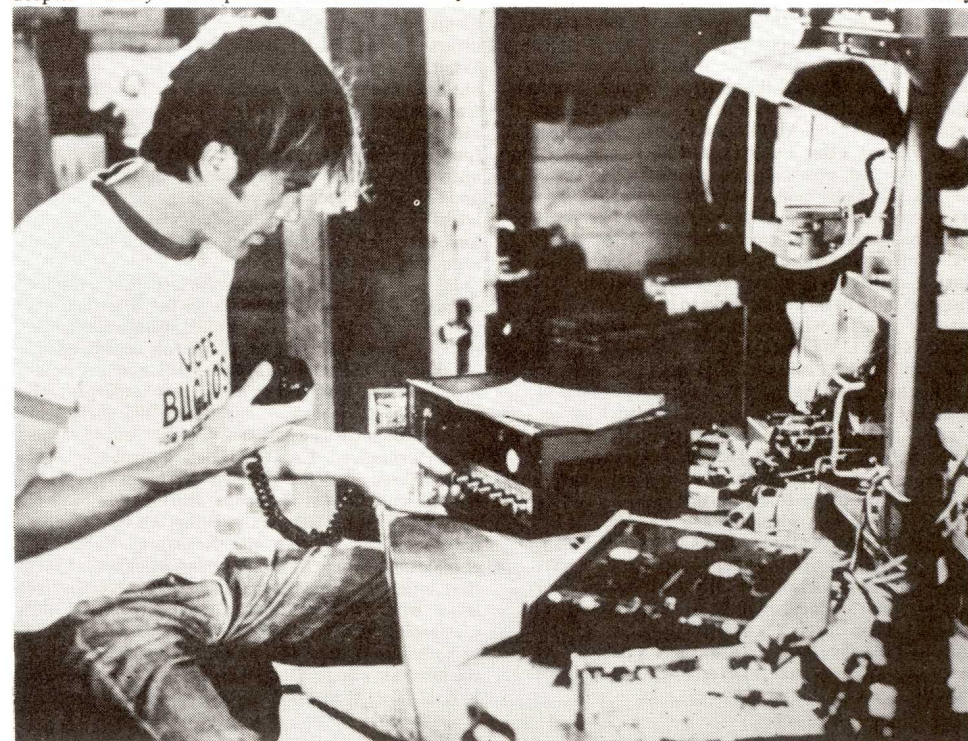
CITIZENS BAND marked Demme's break from Roger Corman and the 'exploitation' material (however offbeat) on which he had been working for six years. It was also a box-office disaster, despite *Variety's* unequivocal accolades: 'Very

amusing grown-up AMERICAN GRAFFITI with big box-office potential.' After an initial, unsuccessful release, the film was re-titled *HANDLE WITH CARE* (in order to tone out the reference to CB radio and thus attract a wider audience) but did no better. Even in Britain, the film stayed on the shelf for three years, with distributors uncertain how to open it.

On the face of it, the film was a guaranteed hit: its story of CB radio users in the small South-western town of Union (another symbolic name, for which Demme seems to have a special fondness) should have tied in neatly with the CB craze that was sweeping America. Its stars (Paul Le Mat and Candy Clark) both recalled the fresh, mobile enthusiasm of AMERICAN GRAFFITI, in which they had appeared in 1973. And Paul (BAD NEWS BEARS IN BREAKING TRAINING) Brickman's script displays a very classical, comic construction: CB radio is used as the medium for a whole series of misapprehensions (both intended and unintended) amongst its loose group of characters: Le Mat as a faithful son rather weary of his cantankerous father and anxious about his relationship with estranged girlfriend (Candy Clark) and brother (Bruce McGill); a bigamous trucker who gets caught out; a revivalist priest; a pre-teen lecher; a CB hooker who works on the road. The dark side of all this smalltown static centres on Le Mat—his strained family relationships and his determination to track down the illegal CB users who are broadcasting with too much power and interrupting 'serious' CB business (road safety, emergency communication). The light side comes with our gradual realisation (and the film's climactic revelation) that the radio allows all its characters a metaphorical escape, a sudden access to fantasy. Under their 'handles' or pseudonyms, the townspeople of Union are living out repressed wishes and unsuspected dreams. The dark and the light come together in a striking finale, when Le Mat's father wanders off and the whole community, linked by radio, successfully searches for him—in the process the gulf between names and faces, between what seemed and what was, is revealed.

The film's problem is a dual one. In an obvious sense, the need to keep its characters isolated (visually) and linked at first only by radio, puts an inevitable brake on the pace. More importantly, in the midst of a decade when American comedy cinema was increasingly slapstick and decreasingly witty, *CITIZENS BAND* must have been too much of a cinephile's film. It isn't just Capra and Preston Sturges, but Tex Avery jokes (the road, the scatty names chosen as 'handles') and a period Disney climax in a forest glade. And, as in most of Demme's other films, the tone is elusive, the tears bitter and the laughter bright—demanding an audience with ironic sense and a willingness to wait. Perhaps, in the age of TV comedy construction, that counts as the sign of a poorly-made film.

Chris Auty





HOPPER: BANG GOES THE AMERICAN DREAM

Dennis Hopper's popular image, as both actor and director, suggests a Peter Pan who got mixed up with the wrong crowd. A rebel without a cause who grew more and more rebellious for less and less cause. A spiteful little twister in the other-directed roles he tended to play up to *EASY RIDER*, a buttonholing, bearded little freak in most of what he has done since — one part sneaky punk to one part droning hippy. It is an image which Hopper will probably never quite shake off, if only because he still so much looks the part of the aggrieved adolescent, the rebel people want inevitably to patronise rather than understand (like James Dean), the truculent nay-sayer who is all woolly argot and defiant narcissism.

Only gradually, it seems, will this image be tempered with that of the *cinéaste maudit*, even though it is now ten years since his second film as director, *THE LAST MOVIE*, was covered in glory at the Venice Film Festival and then buried in granite by the producers-distributors. Hopper's case has not been helped by the fact that he has always been his own most willing, if not most articulate, spokesman. Even as an actor, he had a greater off-screen than on-screen presence, which helped to create the impression of someone who was trying too hard to find something to be against. It all began, of course, with the association with James Dean in *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*. Dean was a star and therefore had a lease to be as rebellious as he liked; he may have been tormented by a lack of cause, but his short-lived (all the better) career certainly had a purpose in film culture and the cultural history of his time. Hopper, however, was a bit players, and was still one when the first stage of his career also came to an abrupt close, in a way more fraction than glorious. On *FROM HELL TO TEXAS* (some three years after *REBEL*), Hopper's Method need to feel his way into a part clashed with Henry Hathaway's hard-nosed habit of dictating line readings. Hopper has recounted how one epic session of retakes ended with the director's immortal pronouncement: "Kid, there's one thing I can promise you — you'll never work in this town again."

By then Hopper could only seem to be a pretender to the throne, an impersonator of the Dean of teenage idols. It says something for his truthfulness as an actor, however, that he could (as Neil Young has it in *OUT OF THE BLUE*) be "gone but not forgotten". After a six-year hiatus, he returned to acting (it is one of Hollywood's minor mysteries that it was Henry Hathaway who brought him back, in *THE SONS OF KATIE ELDER*), with no apparent loss of trajectory. He returned as a support rather than a leading actor, but surely one of the few such who could, within a few years, be treated as a recognisable persona, an actor whose identity could be self-consciously invoked in films as diverse as *KID BLUE* and *APOCALYPSE NOW*. What, in a way, had intervened was *EASY RIDER*, but even that conspicuous success had not so much transformed as absorbed Dennis Hopper. It became famous as one of those film industry milestones (pointing the way to the youth market, the era of untried directors and low-budget movie-making), and could be treated (praised then, condemned later) as a statement of the Zeitgeist, of 'going to look for America' and finding only moral waste and redneck repression.

It is even ironically appropriate that Hopper seems less the major presence in the film than his travelling companion Peter Fonda, whose nickname is "Captain America" and whose role combined his biker from *THE WILD ANGELS* and his acid-dropper from *THE TRIP*, those two 'underground' classics of the previous decade (in the second of which Hopper was another sidekick). And in terms of performances, *EASY RIDER* is probably best remembered as the lift to stardom of Jack Nicholson, who was to become the Outside Man of the '70s. Hopper persists in being the upstart; the nuisance, rather than the Romantic Rebel; he complains too much, in a whining intellectual way that is always chasing philosophical propositions down dark alleys of jargon, ever to achieve the existential authority of the American cinema's principal dropouts, from Dean to Nicholson. One of the most amusing reflections on the Hopper persona is *KID BLUE*, in which the failed outlaw is kicked

from pillar to post by the good citizens of Dime Box, who are not sure how much of a threat he is but can plainly see he is not respectable. Even more self-mocking, one would think, is his role in *APOCALYPSE NOW* as a hyped-up, doped-out photojournalist (in the gaps of his career as a film actor/maker, Hopper has established himself as a photographer), playing acolyte to the Method's most charismatic exponent, Marlon Brando.

Hopper's career as a director has been even more intermittent than his acting. But here again, the impression he gives of a peripheral figure, rather perversely and self-indulgently doing his own thing, is belied by the way the films themselves move quite surely to the centre of things. *EASY RIDER*, in fact, was so central that it was all but completely consumed at the moment it appeared: one of those instant critical and commercial successes which seem to leave no after-trace, and so arouse suspicion that they were mere modish wonders. And if he helped to kick off the 'youth-movie' cycle, Hopper became one of the first victims of the false optimism it encouraged in the studios. His next project, *THE LAST MOVIE*, about a Hollywood film unit making a Western in a Peruvian village, was so hated by Universal that Hopper was able to buy it outright a few years later. What has been written about this film has tended to describe it in sarcastically punning terms as ego-tripping. But by the sound of it, this black, anti-movie—Hopper's original cruel jest was to have Henry Hathaway directing John Wayne, not Sam Fuller directing Rod Cameron, in the film within the film—might have had a premonitory self-awareness, the sense of cinema as a morbid illusion that crops up later in films like *KINGS OF THE ROAD*. Wim Wenders, at least, has acknowledged Hopper as not just an *enfant terrible* but a significant presence by casting him as one of the film director-gangsters in *THE AMERICAN FRIEND*. Ten years after the *LAST MOVIE* comes the terminal movie, or the true apocalypse now, in *OUT OF THE BLUE*.

Richard Combs



'The American Dreamer'



'Out of the Blue'



'Apocalypse Now'

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE

(February 10)

(For credits, please see the Nicholas Ray section)

Although Hopper's career as an actor has been broken and intermittent, there is a consistency, and even a satisfying symmetry, to it. His debut role in *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*, after being signed at eighteen to a contract with Warner Bros., is small. He is just one of the teenagers who congregate round James Dean, first to intimidate him as the new boy in town and then to serve as a kind of hostile chorus. Hopper is appropriately sullen, and looks as if he could turn mean at the flick of a switchblade. But his clean-cut delinquent acquires extra significance when seen from the perspective of his archetypal drop-out of a later era: the shaggy biker of *EASY RIDER*. What happened to Hopper in between, including the exile from Hollywood from 1958 to 1964, now seems a true enough crooked road to have followed between those two points.

It is difficult, of course, not to see the association with Dean (continued the following year in *GIANT*) as a blessing for this journey—or as one of the factors that predisposed Hopper to make it. Of his relationship with Dean, he has commented: 'He was great, just great: he would have been a terrific director. He was not my best friend or anything. He was five years older than me. We had a professional relationship; I got to ride in his Porsche a couple of times and learned a lot about acting from him. He was like a teacher, and I was his student'. In other ways, however, *REBEL* has in itself become a recurring motif in Hopper's work. In *EASY RIDER*, he picks up Dean's colours to become the standard-bearer for another disillusioned generation. The picture of generational continuity is subsequently complicated by *OUT OF THE BLUE*, which observes how one wasted generation simply lays waste to the next. It also makes highly charged references to the 50s—in symbolic dress and

general masochistic behaviour—as if Hopper were intent on dragging the family problem picture through the next stage of nihilism and degeneration.

Richard Combs

EASY RIDER

(February 24, 26, 27)

Director: Dennis Hopper.

U.S.A., 1969.

Script: Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Terry Southern.

Photography: Laszlo Kovacs.

Music/songs: Gerry Goffin, Carole King, Jamie Robbie Robertson, Antonia Duren, Elliott Ingber, Larry Wagner, Jimi Hendrix, Jack Keller, David Axelrod, Mike Bloomfield, Bob Dylan, Roger McGuinn; performed by Steppenwolf, The Byrds, The Band, The Holy Modal Rounders, Fraternity of Man, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Little Eva, The Electric Prunes, The Electric Flag, Roger McGuinn.

Leading Players: Peter Fonda (*Wyatt*), Dennis Hopper (*Billy*), Antonio Mendoza (*Jesus*), Phil Spector (*Connection*), Mac Mashourian (*Body Guard*), Jack Nicholson (*George Hanson*).

Technicolor. Certificate X. 95 minutes.

EASY RIDER has so much become a part of movie mythology that it is difficult now to separate Hopper's achievement from the wider significance of the film. Produced for just a few hundred thousand dollars, it was sufficiently successful to turn the heads of production executives all over Hollywood (who had recently suffered the headache of expensive blockbusters that flopped at the box office). So *EASY RIDER* inaugurated a new trend towards more modest budgets, although it was not long before those same executives were competing again to make

the one big movie that would roll up a fortune (and younger directors like Steven Spielberg and George Lucas were helping them to do it). With its soundtrack composed of Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Robbie Robertson, Carole King and others, and its fairly constant pot-smoking, *EASY RIDER* also became *the* pop event of its time, its despair and alienation from America merely a predictable reflex gesture. In fact, simple though it might be, its message about the American Dream that had lost its way is both sharply pointed and, literally and metaphorically, takes in a lot of ground. Not quite Hopper's premier effort as director (he is said to have shot some sequences of Roger Corman's *THE TRIP*, in which he also appeared with Jack Nicholson and Peter Fonda), it has clarity and resonance that its reputation may not lead one to expect.

Richard Combs

THE AMERICAN DREAMER

(February 24, 26, 27)

Directors: Lawrence Schiller, L.M. Kit Carson. U.S.A., 1971.

Script: Dennis Hopper, L.M. Kit Carson, Lawrence Schiller.

Photography: Chuck Levy.

Music/songs: Christopher Sikelianos, John Buck Wilkin, Gene Clark, Fred Neil, The Abbey Road Singers, John Manning, Zack Van Arsdale, Princess Lida Amun, Geddes, Motau and Tass, the Hello People.

Featuring: Dennis Hopper.

Colour. 90 minutes. 16 mm.

Like one of those Disney wild-life documentaries, *THE AMERICAN DREAMER* pursues its subject to his desert lair (Taos, New Mexico) and then has him perform for the camera. The result is a blend of the indulgent and quixotic, the revelatory and the masturbatory, with the film-makers (Lawrence Schiller and L.M. Kit Carson) seeming at times to want to provoke and

at others to merge with their subject. In this, the film is as much an artefact of its time as *EASY RIDER*. What it documents is some vague impulse towards 'letting it all hang out', which means that the documentarists allow Hopper to talk back to them, to express amusement, surprise or annoyance at some of their intrusions, but never allow such 'feed-back' to shape the film itself nor answer it with any insights of their own. The camera is always something of a camp follower, promoting the suspicion that the project was very much part of the post-*EASY RIDER* euphoria and never got beyond seeing its subject as a counter-culture phenomenon. There is some gentle fun-poking in the scene where Hopper, surrounded by a bevy of girls who have been specially flown in—apparently as the result of Hopper's jesting remark to Bert Schneider about what he would like most in the world to have—improvises a sensitivity encounter session. But there is also some free-floating solemnity—Hopper, framed alone in the desert remarking that if you believe in evolution you also have to believe in revolution—and a regrettable lack of any biographical background or history. The film is valuable, however, simply because it catches Hopper at that moment between the phenomenal success of *EASY RIDER* and the imminent disaster of *THE LAST MOVIE*, which he was editing at the time and which can be seen in fascinating snatches on the moviola.

Richard Combs.



THE LAST MOVIE

(March 31)

Director: Dennis Hopper.
U.S.A., 1971.

Script: Stewart Stern. Based on a story by Dennis Hopper and Stewart Stern.

Photography: Laszlo Kovacs.

Music: Kris Kristofferson.

Leading Players: Dennis Hopper, Julie Adams, Rod Cameron, Severn Darden, Sam Fuller, Stella Garcia, Don Gordon, Kris Kristofferson, John Phillip Law, Tomas Milian, Michelle Phillips, Russ Tamblyn, and the villagers of Chinchero, Peru.

Technicolor. Certificate not yet issued. 108 minutes.

A remarkable, rambling, radical mess that turns cinematic illusionism inside out while investigating the imperialism of the image and conveying equal measures of sustained playful pleasure and sheer perversity. Hopper's instantly legendary follow-up to *EASY RIDER* almost proved its title premonitory with its rapid withdrawal in the States and its failure to secure any release here. Hopper starts the film as a stuntman and wrangler for Sam Fuller's location unit, shooting a Billy the Kid movie in Peru, and ends it as the sacrificial 'star' of the same movie, 're-enacted' by the Peruvian Indians with bamboo equipment and a naive conviction in ultimate realism. In between he lives out the inevitable corruption of the archetypal American friend and dreamer, dabbling in love and money across a cultural gulf: indulging, then suffering for, Hollywood's sins. The film is an act of self-criticism, streaked with self-indulgence, veering towards self-destruction. In its search for a new form, it remains an open-ended question: scrambling genre schematics with underground concerns and techniques. And an index to its troubling audacity is that, ten years on, it's still the

subject of defensively nervous jokes in Hollywood's halls of power. As Neil Young would have it later in *OUT OF THE BLUE*, and Hopper comes almost conclusively close to demonstrating here: 'It's better to burn out than to fade away...' (Paul Taylor)

... This is the first narrative, a film on film-making in the tradition of *THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL* or *TWO WEEKS IN ANOTHER TOWN* only crossed with *WEEKEND*, Godard's own rumination on film-making. Hopper distances himself from the situation he portrays by showing the chaos involved in the production of a routine Western (though Fuller wants Billy's death scene to 'have balls'), attacking it externally as a social critic would (he has likened himself in this manner to Diego Rivera), trying to disgust the audience with what they are seeing—the exploitation of a largely untouched wilderness by an American company without thought to the consequences their presence will have, either on the indigenous culture or on the natural surroundings... Hopper cleverly sets up a dichotomy between the Peruvian Indians and the film company/cowboys in his film, which, like the one being shot, is a Western, only it is not only a post-*WILD BUNCH* Western, but a post-mortem, the last Western, the end of the West. The film Samuel Fuller is shooting is noticeably absent of Indians, who are presumably outside the frame, seething under the invasion of Hollywood but are finally conquered as they begin to imitate the Americans after they have left. The Indians forsake their own culture for film-making as ritual, but without distinguishing between the real and the pretended. At the film's end, Kansas [Hopper] tries to explain and show how a Hollywood fight is staged instead of the literal fighting the people believe is called for, but it is already too late. By getting them to fight among themselves, Hollywood can continue to subjugate them.

"Hopper clearly has a foot in both camps. His use of the Western, a symbol of yearning for a simpler, more wholesome time which never actually existed, much as individuals come to look on their own idealized adolescence (the name Hopper chooses for himself, Kansas, alludes to his own youth near Dodge City, a landmark in the Hollywood West, thus merging his own life, his screen life, the West of his youth, and the West of his imagination), contrasts with his natural inclination towards the avant-garde, his respect for the traditional narrative opposing that which denies the sufficiency of the traditional narrative to say the things that now need to be said. In the *LAST MOVIE*, Hopper is seeking a new form because the old one no longer has any validity, being as exhausted as the subjects or genres it took for its vehicles. If his film cannot find its form finally, it is precisely because the search for a form is all there is at the moment..."

Extracts from an article by Richard Dorfman, published in *The Velvet Light Trap*, No. 14

KID BLUE

(March 10, 12, 13)

Director: James Frawley.

U.S.A., 1973.

Script: Edwin Shrake.

Photography: Billy Williams.

Music: Tim McIntire, John Rubinstein.

Leading players: Dennis Hopper (*Bickford Waner*), Warren Oates (*Reese Ford*), Peter Boyle (*Preacher Bob*), Ben Johnson (*Sheriff 'Mean John' Simpson*), Lee Purcell (*Molly Ford*).

DeLuxe colour. Certificate A. 100 minutes.

KID BLUE is the most lyrical, whimsical and the most symbolic treatment of the counter culture as represented by Dennis Hopper. It might even be accused of flirting dangerously with allegory, and of shamelessly clinching with the standard theme of the post-*WILD BUNCH* Western: the closing of the frontier, and the 'settling' of the West in a pejorative sense. But *KID BLUE* is an eccentric, even antic version of that oft-told tale, dancing nimbly along more than one frontier of time, type and invention.

It opens at the turn of the century, as Bickford Waner (Hopper) decides to abandon a less than successful life of crime for respectability and a steady job in the little town of Dime Box. Both prove rather hard to come by, however, as the



citizens, even without knowing Bickford's past, regard him as irredeemably reprobate. Eventually he recognises that his true society is with fellow outcasts like Preacher Bob (Peter Boyle), who tinkers with a flying machine, and a trio of Indians who have abdicated from Dime Box's vision of the future. That vision is centred on Hendricks' Great American Ceramic Novelty Company, a burgeoning industrial enterprise devoted to the production of Santa Claus ashtrays bearing tiny American flags.

It is a conception, in fact, which might be unbearably whimsical, were it not for the skill with which it is rooted in time, place and character by Edwin Shrake's screenplay and James Frawley's direction. Remarkable, in the first case, is the friendship between Bickford and the mild-mannered white collar worker uncharacteristically played by Warren Oates. The latter hankers after a time of true intimacy and trust very different from the modern age which clearly lies just around the corner—a Grecian ideal, in fact, which connects with some mock-Olympian parallels which Shrake seems to draw with his other characters. Abetted by the Panavision camerawork of Billy Williams, Frawley grounds the film in a period honesty about lighting and décor, ensuring that it never slips into period camp, into the easy, anti-establishment jasper of a contemporary cousin in subject, *STEELYARD BLUES*.

Richard Combs

MAD DOG (Mad Dog Morgan)

(March 3)

Director: Philippe Mora.

Australia, 1976.

Script: Philippe Mora. Based on the book *Morgan, the Bold Bushranger* by Margaret Carnegie.

Photography: Mike Molloy.

Music/songs: Patrick Flynn, Danny Spencer, David Gulpilil.

Leading Players: Dennis Hopper (*Daniel Morgan*), Jack Thompson (*Detective Mainwaring*), David Gulpilil (*Billy*), Frank Thring (*Superintendent Cobham*), Michael Pate (*Superintendent Winch*), Wallace Eaton (*Macpherson*).

Eastman Colour/Scope. Certificate X. 95 minutes (cut from 110).

Probably the best examples of Dennis Hopper's very considerable abilities as an actor are his performance as the disturbed American soldier in Henry Jaglom's *TRACKS* and as the outlaw Daniel Morgan in this striking Australian film by Philippe Mora. Both films have been shamefully neglected in Britain, with neither of them receiving wide distribution and with *MAD DOG* suffering the added humiliation of distributor's cuts. Yet Mora's movie still stands as a quite extraordinary achievement, and one that loses nothing from comparisons with more celebrated Australian films of the 1970s. It's based on a novel by Margaret Carnegie, which tells the true story of one of Australia's notorious outlaws from that period when the country was experiencing the harsh transition from penal colony to independent nation. At the start of the film, Morgan is a young Irishman who has little success as a prospector during the gold rush of the 1850s. Embittered by his experiences of the brutalities of the penal system (he is sentenced to 12 years hard labour, branded M for Malefactor, and raped by his dehumanised fellow-prisoners as a result of committing the offence of holding up an immigrant but stealing only the clothes he needs),

he retreats into the bush and makes outlawry his profession. He later strikes up a friendship with another rebel (an aborigine who has been cast out because he is believed to be half-white), and the pair become legendary figures who gain admirers because they steal only from rich farmers and run rings around the hated police.

Although never blinking from the cruelties and injustices of the period, the first part of Mora's film is careful to establish a sharp contrast between these and the beauty of the landscape. Both Morgan's lifestyle and the culture of the aborigine are also clearly signalled as representing alternatives to the form of 'civilisation' that is being ruthlessly imposed, while the film's anti-racist and pro-drugs messages are unmistakable. But the tone darkens considerably as the film begins to present the hopelessness of the outlaw's predicament. Taunted by the sadistic superintendent Cobham, and increasingly aware of the futility of his own life, the desperate Morgan seeks refuge at gunpoint with the wealthy Macpherson family. In one of the finest scenes in the film, the doomed outlaw leaves the house in the early morning, knowing full well that it is surrounded by police. It is here especially that the full force of the film's more subtle point is brilliantly expressed, with Hopper's powerful performance and the film's sympathetic gaze working in perfect harmony. Tom Milne described the effect of the film very well in his review for the *Monthly Film Bulletin*:

"... The reason it works, and works so powerfully, stems partly from Dennis Hopper's superb performance (shading gradually from the simple charm of the man into desperation and finally sheer mortal weariness), and partly from the fact that Mora, while giving his conception the solid grounding of a traditional revenge Western, has consciously heightened certain elements until they acquire an emblematic quality. On the one hand, there are the gunfights, chases and outlaw roisterings familiar from Western convention. On the other, starting out from the same conventions (the Judge doing some lazy bird-watching as Cobham insinuates his equation that longer sentences mean more roads), an escalation of alien excess: the Judge quietly muttering 'Go down to Hell and say I sent you there!' after sentencing Morgan; the diabolical jailer with the huge teardrop tattooed in the corner of his eye; the bizarre physical identification between the pig-like Cobham and the bull-terriers he values above human life. Reaching its climax in the extraordinarily effective final sequence of the film, this sense of estrangement (akin to Brecht's distanciation) is complete. With Morgan, as he fumblingly tries to raise his manners to match the grave courtesies, the elegant dinner-table, the girl at the piano in the Macpherson home, we look on privilege for the first time. With Morgan, as he pulls a kangaroo cape over his shoulders (in echo of an engraving he once saw of an extinct beast), we see that he is, and always was, entirely expendable to the scheme of things. And with his corpse, as Cobham perpetrates his entirely rational barbarism upon it, we are confronted, finally, with a chilling restatement of that eternal enigma, the enduring irrationality of the social ethos."



TRACKS

(March 17)

Director: Henry Jaglom.
U.S.A., 1976.

Script: Henry Jaglom.

Photography: Paul Glickman.

Leading Players: Dennis Hopper (*Sergeant Jack Falen*), Taryn Power (*Stephanie*), Dean Stockwell (*Mark*), Topo Swope (*Chloe*), Michael Emil (Michael E. Jaglom) (*Emile*), Zack Norman (*Gene*).

Colour. Certificate X. 92 minutes.

Before we meet Hopper's high-on-war harlequin going into Vietnam in *APOCALYPSE NOW*, we have already met his up-tight alter ego, Sergeant Jack Falen, coming out in *TRACKS*. It is something of an achievement in itself that, given his scattered Hollywood appearances, Hopper should have appeared in two of the most significant American films about the war. *APOCALYPSE NOW*, for all its limitations, is still one of a select few actually to deal with the war, and *TRACKS*, one of the minority in a comparatively overcrowded genre, the returning vet saga, not to expend itself in limited action clichés. The strength of *TRACKS*, quite simply, is its basic motivating idea, which contains a powerful spring of metaphor: Falen, returning home at the end of American involvement in Vietnam in 1973, is transporting the coffin of another soldier across country by train. Before we notice his inability to tell the same story twice about the coffin's occupant—a close friend, an unknown hero, or a black man who saved his life in combat—we probably suspect the coffin and

his mission to be related more to the demons in his own mind than to anything that actually happened in the war. And the train journey can be seen as another version of the odyssey in search of America, *EASY RIDER* on the straight and narrow recalling also the excursion of Jack Nicholson's "navy of three" in *THE LAST DETAIL*.

It is largely Hopper however, who keeps the idea in motion, with a performance alternating between extremes of watchful quiet and berserk aggression—his paranoia most clearly signalled in his interludes of enforced amiability with fellow passengers and awkward courtship of a girl (Taryn Power). It is with the other passengers, in fact, that director Henry Jaglom begins to dribble away the potential of his conceit, marshalling them at first as if they were figments in Falen's own nightmare itinerary but then allowing them to dawdle on and pick up an improvisatory life of their own. One quarrelsome pair, played by Zack Norman and Michael Emil (in fact Jaglom's brother), have since been given a whole film of their own, the anti-road movie *SITTING DUCKS*. Interest in Falen himself also wanes somewhat with the discovery that Jaglom sees him less as a symptom of Vietnam than of rather more familiar (though secretively detailed) adolescent traumas. But *TRACKS* remains one of the most personal reflections on a war with which the American cinema generally has not come to terms—and Hopper makes it one of their most nervy unsettling train movies since *THE LADY VANISHES*.

Richard Combs

THE AMERICAN FRIEND (Der Amerikanische Freund)

(March 21-23)

Director: Wim Wenders.

West Germany/France, 1977.

Script: Wim Wenders. Based on the novel *Ripley's Game* by Patricia Highsmith.

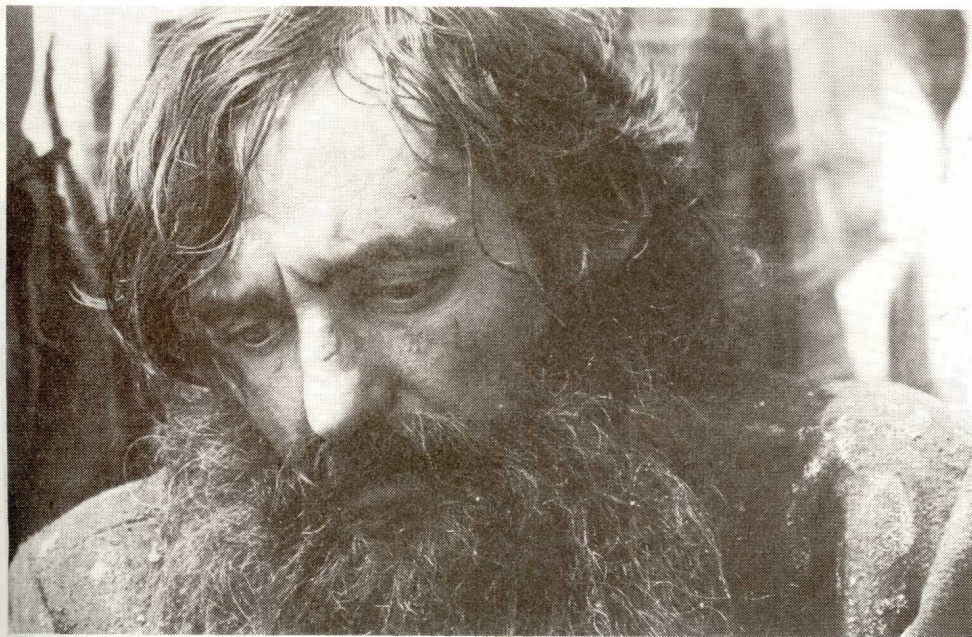
Photography: Robby Müller.

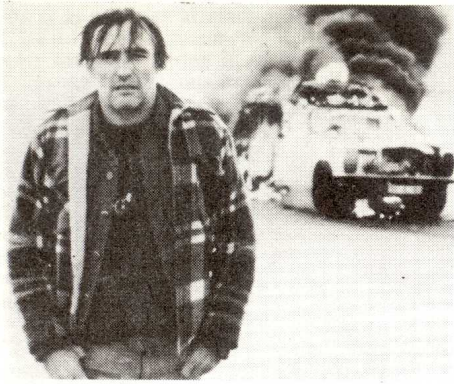
Music: Jürgen Knieper.

Leading Players: Bruno Ganz (*Jonathan Zimmerman*), Dennis Hopper (*Tom Ripley*), Gérard Blain (*Raoul Minot*), Lisa Kreuzer (*Marianne Zimmerman*), Nicholas Ray (*Prokash, "Derwatt"*), Samuel Fuller (*The American*).

Eastman Colour. German and English dialogue. English subtitles. Certificate A. 123 minutes.

Almost as frequently as Orson Welles—a fellow member of that peripatetic masonry of the American cinema's problem children—Dennis Hopper has popped up in European films. And in Wim Wenders' adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley's Game*, he is not only called on to fill out a cameo but to show himself: it is one of the most subtly ambiguous and self-reflective of Hopper's roles. Ambiguity and irony begin with the film's title. Hopper is the American 'friend' who tempts the placid picture-framer played by Bruno Ganz, a man already under death sentence





from cancer, into gambling for his family's future in a game of murder. But if the American is a tempter and a corrupter, he is also a friend, a likeness, in more subterranean ways. The title's final irony is that, through Ganz, Hopper is also looking for something, the New World returning to the Old in search of identity and a lost sense of innocence.

It might be said that, whatever changes Wenders has made to Highsmith's plot (particularly in the latter stages), the film's true subversion of the novel is at the level of the casting. Highsmith's Ripley is an underground man who survives by virtue of a kind of amoral completeness; Wenders' Ripley is a man driven not so much underground as into limbo. Like the heroes of Wenders' earlier films, he seems lost on some Oedipal quest for home and self. And Wenders, who had drawn the imagery for those quests from such disparate toilers in the American vein as John Ford and Fritz Lang, might be repaying the debt here by extending the benefit of his insights to the footloose Hopper.

The permutations, forwards and backwards in time, become even more labyrinthine (or circular) when one connects Nicholas Ray—another key figure and minor role in *AMERICAN FRIEND*—with Hopper's first film (*REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*), Wenders' subsequent tribute to Ray and expiation on the subject of homelessness (*LIGHTNING OVER WATER*), and Hopper's return to directing with a film, *OUT OF THE BLUE*, which relocates the anguished delinquency of *REBEL* in a world of such nihilistic disaffection that Freud, family and all are simply detonated in its ultimate punk gesture. *AMERICAN FRIEND*, with its identification of not just Hopper and Ray but such European directors as Peter Lilienthal, Daniel Schmid and Jean Eustache with the criminal underworld, also hints at some of the anti-cinema sentiments of *THE LAST MOVIE*.

Richard Combs

APOCALYPSE NOW

(March 24, 26, 27)

Director: Francis Coppola.
U.S.A., 1979.

Script: John Milius, Francis Coppola. Based on the novel *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.
Photography: Vittorio Storaro.

Music: Carmine Coppola, Francis Coppola. Other music by Richard Wagner, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors and others.

Leading Players: Marlon Brando (*Colonel Walter E. Kurtz*), Martin Sheen (*Captain Benjamin A. Willard*), Robert Duvall (*Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore*), Dennis Hopper (*Photojournalist*), Albert Hall (*Chief Phillips*).

Technicolor. Certificate X. 35 mm version. 153 minutes.

Dennis Hopper's participation in *APOCALYPSE NOW* seems to have been of a piece with the way every element in Francis Ford Coppola's epic entered at a kind of haphazard tangent and then acquired a mystical, philosophical rightness. It is also, of course, quite germane to Hopper's own brashness, his off-the-cuff methods, his encouragement of a mood of participation, of joint enterprise, even of mystical communion, which make it unsurprising that he should have been in exile in the 50s, briefly at home in the 60s, and adrift somewhere that is neither one nor the other ever since. Of his role in *APOCALYPSE NOW*, he has said: "There was a character in the original book, *HEART OF DARKNESS*, a

Russian Jew in . . . not camouflage, but tattered and torn and patched, like the Tarot Card Fool. He tells the reader all about Kurtz. In the book, you never see Kurtz, except through this man's description. The part was not in the movie at all. So, like, Marlon and Francis went away for a week, came back and decided I should play this part rather than the Green Beret captian, Martin Sheen's predecessor".

The role has Hopper playing one of his most significant sidekicks, and one of his most ironic, since this partiular harlequin—a mind-blown photojournalist, eulogising Kurtz's mission in the jungle in a constant psycho-babble—seems a cruel caricature of everything Hopper had come to represent. He is the mouthpiece, and through him something authentically anarchic about his time, for good or ill, seems to find expression. More, actually, than is expressed by the star-idols he so often serves as acolyte (Brando here, Peter Fonda in *EASY RIDER*), who retreat, out of bewilderment or disgust, into enigma variations on the Garbo ideal of stardom.

In the confusion of what *APOCALYPSE NOW* has to say about Vietnam, Hopper's role is—further irony—perhaps most clear-cut in meaning, his hop-head correspondent having tuned out the beauty of peace and love to tune into the beauty of violence, the "warrior poet" he extols in Kurtz. The medium—psychedelia—has become rather chillingly divorced from the pacific message it carried in the 60s. Hopper here is the outsider who just has a more soulful appreciation of institutionalised violence than the insiders. There is a suggestion of this in what are otherwise inexplicable scenes in the documentary/portrait *THE AMERICAN DREAMER*, when Hopper takes leave of his New Mexico commune/editing studio for some casual target practice in the desert.

Richard Combs

OUT OF THE BLUE

(March 25—30)

Director: Dennis Hopper.
Canada, 1980.

Script: Leonard Yakir, Brenda Nielson.

Photography: Marc Champion.

Music: Tom Lavin; songs: 'My, My, Hey Hey (Out of the Blue)' by Jeff Blackburn, Neil Young, 'Thrasher' by Neil Young, performed by Neil Young; 'Heartbreak Hotel' by M. Axton, T. Durden, E. Presley; 'Another Guy Out of Luck' by and performed by The Pointed Sticks.

Leading Players: Linda Manz (*Cindy 'Cebe' Barnes*), Dennis Hopper (*Don Barnes*), Sharon Farrell (*Kathy Barnes*), Raymond Burr (*Dr. Brean*), Don Gordon (*Charlie*).

Colour. Certificate X. 93 minutes.

OUT OF THE BLUE, the film which Hopper reputedly took over by chance when the material shot by its co-writer and producer Leonard Yakir

was deemed unusable, looks like a natural culmination to his career to date. To begin with, after a ten-year break since his last film as director, the virtually unseen *LAST MOVIE*, it confirms the sureness of his talent, something all too easily obscured by the image of the dilettante drop-out. It confirms, moreover, that his expected sympathy for actors, for the improvisational imperatives of the moment and the clinching argument of strong emotion on the screen (whatever the script is trying to propose at other formal and thematic levels) doesn't necessarily mean that the films are without structure or thematic intelligence. *OUT OF THE BLUE* works through an extraordinary combination of motifs—musical, behavioural, narrative—that allows the film to cohere like a clenched fist, even when all seems confusion, noisy actorish displays and some baffling lapses of continuity (the time sequence of the last third of the movie comes off-handedly adrift).

Through the actors, first of all, the film opens up the kind of spaces, reveals the gaps (not all of a generational nature), where the drama takes place. The three principals could even be inhabiting three different movies, containing within them various mythologies without the film having recourse to what are usually known as *homages*. Hopper, of course, is the wild spirit traceable back through *EASY RIDER* to *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*, now gone to seed in a terminal case of arrested development, mindlessness and self-indulgence, a father who has enthralled and violated his daughter with the heedless machismo of trucking (like biking). Linda Manz, in turn, has taken on the macho accoutrements (and armour) like a tomboy not really ready to turn butch, confiding her private need of the heroes who have failed, fled or fucked her in a private commentary, à la *DAYS OF HEAVEN*, that is part stream of consciousness, part storytelling in the dark and part singalong with Elvis. Sharon Farrell meanwhile plays their wife and mother like a faded country and western flower, and on the sidelines lurks Don Gordon, an actor who has become a regular associate of Hopper's and on-screen a sidekick more lingo-like than any Hopper has played.

Out of this clash of styles, of failing sensibilities, emerges something that might be called punk, and it is particularly to Hopper's credit that his soundtrack accompaniment is never just that. It is more a distillation of what is happening emotionally, with the occasional line of dialogue keyed by the song lyrics. Interestingly, the tenor of the original project was to have been set by a commentary from the Raymond Burr character—a kind of psychiatric legal counsel. Burr has now been pushed, not so much to the sidelines as to increasingly dark corners of the film, from which issue all voices of authority—even Elvis', 'one of the first punks', bewailing the Heartbreak Hotel—offering ambiguous comfort and understanding.

Richard Combs



MEPHISTO

(February 25—March 2; March 4-6)

Director: István Szabó.
Hungary, 1981.

Script: Péter Dobai, István Szabó. Based on the novel by Klaus Mann.

Photography: Lajos Koltai, Gyula Kovacs.

Music: Zdenko Tamássy.

Leading players: Klaus Maria Brandauer (*Hendrik Höfgen*), Ildikó Bánsági (*Nicoletta von Niebuhr*), Krystyna Janda (*Barbara Bruckner*), Rolf Hoppe (*General*), György Cserhalmi (*Hans Miklas*), Péter Andorai (*Otto Ulrichs*), Karin Boyd (*Juliette Martens*).

Eastman Colour. German dialogue/English subtitles. Certificate AA. 144 minutes.

Films about the pre-fascist/early fascist period have been something of an art-house vogue since CABARET began trading on 'divine decadence'. Elements of Italian and French 'retro' styles combined with varying degrees of leftist analysis and right-wing indulgence in a modish genre that has produced more than its fair share of turkeys (e.g. *THE SERPENT'S EGG*, *JUST A GIGOLO*). But István Szabó's *MEPHISTO* is so politically astute and intelligently scripted that it comes across like the first exploration of this historical territory where Communist and fascist tendencies intersect over and over again like tracks at a railway junction.

The film centres on the figure of Hendrik Höfgen, an actor who claws his way to fame in late 'twenties/early 'thirties Germany, moving from (Brechtian) workers' theatre in Hamburg to Argan productions of classic heroic drama in Berlin's State Theatre. But although the figure of an actor—a professional chameleon trained to switch roles and appearances at a moment's bidding—serves to dramatise (in the fullest sense of the word) the question of shifting political allegiances, Szabó insists that everyone has the potential to behave like his protagonist: "Höfgen is a basic type. In our century you can find many like him with a social adaptability that is perilously close to dishonesty. A person like that is most dangerous precisely because of this talent for self-adaptation."

The film has its origins in an early novel by Klaus Mann (the eldest son of Thomas Mann), but Szabó and his co-scenarist Péter Dobai adapted freely because Mann's text, written from exile in 1936, read like a hysterical attack against the Höfgen character—in reality a top German actor called Gustav Grundgens with whom Mann had



had a brief affair a few years earlier. Szabó was aware that to depict Höfgen as the 'monster' of Mann's original was both untrue to the memory of Grundgens and unhelpful to his own thesis. "We aimed to make Höfgen much more ambivalent so that the audience would identify with him and thus be more deeply moved by the contempt which we feel towards him when he becomes a fascist mouthpiece."

The shift away from democratic certainties towards the uncertain future of autocracy is a spectral sensation many people in Britain have admitted to feeling in recent years. For this reason *MEPHISTO* is one of the most important releases of 1981, a film that compels you to interrogate your own political conscience and at the same time to confront the problem of coping with anti-democratic movements on a day-to-day basis. As Szabó puts it: "Many people left Germany in the 1930s. It would be too easy to say that all the honest people left and only the 'collaborators' remained. A whole nation cannot emigrate. It's no way to judge people: leaving is a once-only decision. To stay on is something you have to decide every day!"

The quotation provides the best answer to those critics who saw in *MEPHISTO* some allegorical account of the fate of an artist in a totalitarian State and read it as analogous to Szabó's own relationship to his native Hungary. This

interpretation is off the point, since the problem of how to tackle state repression is articulated not only in the characters who leave Germany (Höfgen's wife Barbara, his girlfriend Juliette) but also in those who stay (Otto Ulrichs, Hans Miklas) as well as in the character of Höfgen himself who, for all his 'collaboration' with the Nazi General, struggles to rescue friends and protect colleagues from Nazi persecution. Furthermore, Szabó's own position within the Hungarian film industry allows him considerable freedom of movement, ideologically speaking.

To visit Budapest is to discover one of the liveliest film production set-ups in Europe, answerable to rather than controlled by the Ministry of Culture and, in some senses, more tolerant than our own state mechanisms (e.g. Board of Censorship) regulating cinema. The other advantage of film-making in Budapest is the city itself, a spectacularly restored and preserved turn-of-the-century capital which supplied Szabó with all the locations (art nouveau cafés, august public buildings, palatial villas, broad boulevards, etc.) from which to recreate cities as far flung as Hamburg, Berlin and Paris. *MEPHISTO* is seldom less than spectacular to look at and never ceases to pose you teasing questions as you watch. Can there be a stronger recommendation?

Martyn Auty

CITY OF WOMEN (La Città delle donne)

(March 11-16, 18-20)

Director: Federico Fellini.
Italy/France, 1980.

Script: Federico Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi, Brunello Rondi.

Photography: Giuseppe Rotunno.

Music: Luis Bacalov.

Leading players: Marcello Mastroianni (*Snàporaz*), Anna Prucnal (*Elena, Snàporaz's Wife*), Bernice Stegers (*Woman on Train*), Iole Silvani (*Motorcyclist*), Donatella Damiani (*Donatella*), Ettore Manni (*Dr. Katzone*).

Eastman Colour. English subtitles. Italian dialogue/English subtitles. Certificate X. 139 minutes.

CITY OF WOMEN is Fellini/Mastroianni/Snàporaz's sexual fantasy dream, beginning and ending with wry Feudian humour as the train on which the 'hero' travels plunges into a tunnel. At a stop in the countryside Snàporaz disembarks in pursuit of a woman whom he follows through woods to a huge hotel given over to a feminist convention. His escape from there, with the aid of an ambivalently benign rollerskating Donatella, brings him into sexual encounters first with a lusty middle-aged woman and then, as night falls, with a slick bunch of pubescent tauntresses. Snàporaz's next escape finds him in the Phallus-shrine-mansion of Dr. 'Superprick' Katzone, who is celebrating his 10,000th conquest and withdrawal from (sexual) life. Raided by S & M beleathered policewomen, Snàporaz ends the party in the masterbedroom with his berating wife. Fleeing under the bed, he makes a surreal exit out the far



side onto a dramatic night-lit big dipper, over which he careens amid women from his past. Denounced for his male chauvinism, Snåporaz is thrown into an amphitheatre of howling women, from which he escapes in a vast air-balloon in the shape of Donatella—only to be deflated by gunfire from the real Donatella. Crashing to earth with a bump, he awakens in his train carriage to find himself surrounded by women from the dream, including his wife, who is seated opposite. He settles back sheepishly to sleep as the train re-enters the tunnel.

As with so many male-constructed representations of women, I expected the film both to anger and seduce me, so I went curious but defensive. I was very aware of the Hampstead audience: at first the atmosphere was of relaxed anticipation, and well into the opening scenes the response was light and jocular. The feminist convention, with its uneasy combination of raucous caricature and virulent manhating, changed all that—the audience, me included, became tense, taut with anxiety provoked by the blind vulnerability and unselfcritical ingenuousness of the man. From then on the film presented an unrelenting series of aborted crescendos, literal and metaphorical coitus interruptus, castrated pleasures; the tension of denied gratification was maintained throughout—an insistent, disquieting confrontation with masculine frailty, but treated with acceptance, not judgementally. Two realisations dawned on me: first, that my awkwardness with the film was that of an outsider; I was a voyeur into an hermetic world of male sexual fantasy, alien but compulsive in its strangeness and 'otherness', which accounted for my lack of identification with the spectacle. Secondly, as a direct result of that realisation, I was able to locate the source of my angry reaction to the initial stages of the film, when I had been fooled by the apparent realism of the opening sequence into reading it on a literal instead of a dream level. Identifying the content as dream imagery freed me to stay with the film in a much more receptive way.

I found it a revelation. No polite veneers here; the film went straight to the gut of the problem—both in its imagery and in its impact on the audience. It was courageously direct in its exploration of the raw anxieties of male psycho-sexuality. In scene after scene, man's conflicting desire and terror of 'woman' was bluntly but pathetically re-enacted. It is not about women as such, or even about sexual relations; the subject of the film is the male psyche. The film's insistent, accumulative reiteration of the painful extremes of power and helplessness *cannot* simply be dismissed as Fellini's private sexual infantilism in the pejorative sense used by some critics; no, surely it characterises that profound infantile trauma of omnipotence versus helplessness which underlies all our experience, and which is often most vividly manifest in adult sexual fantasy. The film has been dubbed open-ended—an arbitrarily finite chunk selected from an infinity of possible variations. I disagree. I see it as circular, as a tightly self-enclosed structure like the snake swallowing its own tail. This structure parallels and reinforces the film's theme: the endless repetition and cyclical nature of neurotic obsessions. If Snåporaz is only shallowly characterised, it is because his character is irrelevant. Fellini is concerned to elaborate the theme of sexual fantasy, not to portray an individual personality; in fact personality deficiency—as a characteristic of obsessive behaviour patterns—more accurately conveys his meaning.

Fellini's work is now often seen as jaded, self-indulgent, sexist and narrowly biographical; but here at least—and painfully unequivocal—his theme has universal significance for the understanding of maleness. It also has a particularly challenging value for women: by presenting in unusually explicit focus an exclusively male viewpoint, it affords women an undisguised glimpse of the male psyche, thus permitting us to articulate with new clarity an archetypal male otherness and thereby casting into sharper relief our own separate experience. So for me the film begs the question what is woman's psycho-sexual world like? How would it look from *our* point of view?

Fellini's *CITY OF WOMEN* left me with a haunting feeling of fresh and sympathetic insight into male psycho-sexual conflict, but also with an awareness of yawning silence in this area for women.

Anthea Callen

FILM WORKSHOP



BRIAN BYRNE

During the spring Lab will be showing the films of Brian Byrne. A stalwart supporter of independent film, Brian has notched up a decade of activity, ranging from his work in the North East through to his involvement in Birmingham with both the Film-makers' Co-op and, at present, the Film Workshop. Since finishing his most recent film, *MR SKIPPER*, Brian has been of invaluable assistance to film activity carried out under the aegis of the Workshop, acting as a production advisor and tutor film-maker on a variety of projects.

Citing his early influences as Joris Ivens and John Grierson, Brian has stayed solidly within that documentary tradition of film-making, recording the experience of work and the lives of working people. With Cumulus Films in the early '70s, he worked in the North East on four short documentaries: *ESTUARY* (three aspects of the River Tees), *RAILWAY* (North Yorks Steam Railway), *RIVERWORK* (a montage of various industries of the Tees), and *NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET*. (Cumulus Films was formed when three film-makers—Roger Schindler, Dave Eadington and Brian—were students at Teesside College of Art).

The first three Cumulus films represent an early attempt by these film-makers to document the industrial life of the region, relying for the most part of the traditional image of Northern based heavy industry with craft heritages and working-class communities. An interest in the

juxtaposition of sound and image characterises these documentaries, while the prevailing influence is clearly that of Grierson and the film-makers associated with the EMB and GPO documentary units of the '30s.

NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET marked a departure from the Grierson mode of film-making. Its direct concerns are to allow other voices, other histories to be heard, which in this case takes the form of harsh commentaries on the fate of individuals whose neighbourhood is benevolently bulldozed into dereliction. Planned as a portrayal of a rapidly dying working-class occupation, the film centres on Bert Earl, a steel worker and part-time chimney sweep who lives in South Bank, a decaying area of Middlesbrough lying in the shadow of the steel works. Brian has commented on the more formal innovations of *NO GRASS*: 'During the editing stage I changed my mind about the style of the film and began to incorporate shots of the clapperboard, sound recordist, scratches etc., thereby disposing of the concept of the invisible camera crew and making the audience aware that they are watching a filmed version of reality. So the film is a mixture of traditional and avant-garde styles'.

In Birmingham Brian has completed one film, *MR SKIPPER* (Birmingham Film Workshop, 1979). It explores the background and ideas of a Birmingham artist, Mr Skipper, who is observed working, and examples of his work are seen. In its themes of history and nostalgia, *MR SKIPPER*

echoes the concerns of the earlier film about Bert Earl. Since completing MR SKIPPER, Brian has put his hand to crewing on two Film Workshop productions, SWEET CHARIOT and KOKUMA.

Rather than show all of Brian's films as a self-enclosed retrospective, we have decided to include in this short series other films which have been cited as important influences. These other films fall into two groups: traditions of regionalism and of the documentary film.

To point to influences in the documentary tradition we include films by Joris Ivens (NEW EARTH—Holland, 1934), Alberto Cavalcanti (COALFACE—GB., 1935) and Humphrey Jennings (A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY—GB., 1945).

Joris Ivens made NEW EARTH in Holland in 1934. It documents the final stages in the building of a dam. Ivens uses three cameras: one is identified with the land, one with the sea, and the other with the workforce building the dam. In the editing of the film, Ivens admits that he was aided by his experience in re-editing newsreel footage for workers' groups of the '20s.

COALFACE provided Alberto Cavalcanti with the opportunity to experiment with the use of sound in documentary film-making. Recognising that sound has an existence of its own, Cavalcanti applied music, words and noises to extend the visual sense rather than merely duplicating it.

A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY by Humphrey Jennings is a picture of life in Britain during the final year of the last war and takes the form of a diary covering a baby's first year of life. The life of the nation is captured through a documentary form that continuously links image, sound, music and comment in an associative montage.

A guiding principle in independent cinema in both the North-east and the Midlands is a commitment to an identifiable regional culture: a mode of film-making that attempts to make more flexible the rigid divisions between producer and consumer, while at the same time paying careful attention to documenting the under or non-represented.

This commitment to a non-parochial regionalism is evident in two other films that we'll be showing: LAUNCH (Amber Films, 1973) and INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN (Roger Buck, 1980), which register contrasting styles in the presentation of working-class experiences (in this case, shipyard work). LAUNCH clearly falls within a tradition of documentary film-making that draws its inspiration from the 'drama of the doorstep' aesthetic of the '30s. Roger Buck's discussion of the decline of North-Eastern shipbuilding in INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN draws on a Brechtian format of episodic sequences, combining texts from Marx, Kipling and Jack Common within the overall influences of Jennings and Straub.

Roger Shannon

Information on booking these films can be obtained from the Birmingham Film Workshop (021-359-4192) or from Amber Films, 9 The Side, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Screening Dates (for performance times, please see the calendar at the centre of the programme):

RAILWAY (Brian Byrne, G.B., 1974. 15 minutes) and COALFACE (Alberto Cavalcanti, G.B., 1935. 10 minutes) will be shown on 4—6 February, with THE CONSTANT FACTOR.

RIVERWORK (Brian Byrne, G.B., 1975. 15 minutes) and LAUNCH (Amber Films, G.B., 1973. 10 minutes) will be shown on 11—16 February, with CITIZENS BAND.

MR SKIPPER (Brian Byrne, G.B., 1980. 8 minutes) and A DIARY FOR TIMOTHY (Humphrey Jennings, G.B., 1945. 39 minutes) will be shown on 21—23 February, with PROSTITUTE.

NO GRASS UNDER MY FEET (Brian Byrne, G.B., 1975. 15 minutes) and INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN (Roger Buck, G.B., 1979. 19 minutes) will be shown on 21—23 February, with BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

ESTUARY (Brian Byrne, G.B., 1974. 13 minutes) and NEW EARTH (Joris Ivens, Holland, 1934. 23 minutes) will be shown on 25—30 March, with OUT OF THE BLUE.

NEWS

Channel Four

Following the successful series of discussions on Channel Four (Four on 4) recently held in the Arts Lab Cinema, the Birmingham Film Workshop hopes to publish a booklet based on the talks and contributions from the forum. Further scrutiny of television is planned for the New Year, with a music and television event on the cards. The final arrangements are also now in hand regarding the Fourth Channel's purchase of MIRROR, MIRROR (for three showings over seven years).

B.F.I. Production Board

Yugesh Walia is applying for Script Development Funding from the British Film Institute. His proposal is to examine Indian life in Britain during a period of British history which so far has been almost totally ignored, especially from an Indian point of view. There has been very little attention paid to the creation of images that suggest a history of settlement in Britain, and a consequent sharing in and living through political events. The passing of the Indian Independence Act and the partitioning of the subcontinent had catastrophic effects on Hindu, Moslem, and Sikh communities, not only in India but elsewhere as well. The film will show the effects of events in the autumn of 1947 on such communities living in Britain. The aim is to get away from the conventional ways in which contemporary India is depicted: either through the eyes of people who 'stayed on', or through images of immigration and the 'numbers game'.

Regional Production Fund

The Birmingham Film Workshop is applying to this newly constituted body for funding to continue the substantial programme of work which goes under the title of 'News and Newsreels'. The project will interlink the making of a documentary with a variety of educational inputs. The subject of the film would be the work done by the newsreel and documentary groups in the 1930s. Following the emphasis on the 'News and Newsreel' work, the focus will fall on those initiatives which conceive and present themselves as oppositional (the Grierson movement would be marginal to our interest). The film will combine examples of newsreels from the '30s with interviews with people who were active as film workers, such as Ralph Bond and Ivor Montagu. Ralph Bond's contribution to both WORKERS TOPICAL NEWSREELS in the '30s and PEOPLES' MARCH FOR JOBS in the '80s (for A.C.T.T.) is important in this respect.

Roger Shannon

fronted by black American independent film-makers. These issues are of obvious relevance to the current situation in Britain.

The experience of the '80s in America provided a new cultural aesthetic but the political and economic constraints still remained, as is evident in Hollywood's rapid take-up of 'blaxploitation' movies in the late '60s and early '70s. The new black cinema is represented by the works of film-makers like Charles Burnett (KILLER OF SHEEP), Larry Clark (PASSING THROUGH), Warrington Hudlin (STREET CORNER STORIES), William Greaves (STILL A BROTHER), Haile Gerima (BUSH MAMA) and Sharon Larkin (YOUR CHILDREN COME BACK TO YOU). In these films the film-makers are going beyond the stereotypes offered by Hollywood and creating in that process authentic images of the black American experience. The importance of their work is that it establishes an Afro-American aesthetic which is a new important contribution to film culture.

On this day event, the above questions will be discussed with film-makers and invited speakers. There will be a selection of films by black American, British, African and Caribbean film-makers.

The Programmes:

The three programmes have been selected from the Festival of Black Independent Film-makers held at the National Film Theatre and the Commonwealth Institute in London. All three programmes are open to the public, but it is expected that the morning and afternoon sessions will be of special interest to schools, community groups and youth organisations.

Programme One: A selection of short films drawn from the work of black American, British, African and Caribbean film-makers. Plus talks by film-makers and a chance to ask questions and join in discussion. 10.00 a.m. to 12.15 p.m.

Programme Two: A further selection of films, again with talks and discussion. 1.30 to 3.30 p.m.

Programme Three: The feature film KILLER OF SHEEP, followed by a talk and discussion. 6.30 to 8.00 p.m.

Admission Prices: £1 (concessions 50p) for programmes one and two (£2 for groups up to 10). Normal Arts Lab prices will apply to programme three.

KILLER OF SHEEP

(February 11)

Director: Charles Burnett.

U.S.A., 1979.

Script: Charles Burnett.

Photography: Charles Burnett.

Music: Grant Still, Paul Robeson, Louis Armstrong and others.

Leading Players: Henry Gale Sanders, Kaycee Moore, Charles Bracy, Angela Barnett.

Black and white. Certificate not yet issued. 84 minutes.

"One of the biggest successes at the Berlin Film Festival was an unheralded low-budget feature by a young black American independent film-maker, Charles Burnett. The film, KILLER OF SHEEP, is a frank, compelling documentary-like portrait of life on the fringes of poverty in a black ghetto in Los Angeles. Stan is employed in a slaughterhouse and his brutal work infects his whole life, numbing his emotions and cutting him off from family and friends. The everyday struggle for survival is hard but there is resilience in these people and even humour, despite the undercurrent of anxiety and rage. There are no illusions that hard work will win them the rewards of the American dream, but they avoid the temptations of other options. Burnett studied film-making under Basil Wright who, he says, changed his whole outlook and introduced him to films as a means of expressing the dignity of man. There is indeed great dignity in KILLER OF SHEEP, despite the harsh realities of the environment in which Stan and his friends live".

Ken Wlaschin/

London Film Festival Programme.

BLACK FILM-MAKERS

(February 11)

It is significant that this year's London Film Festival included three films about the black experience in Britain. In the past, the black presence in the media has been limited to the occasional television programme (*Love Thy Neighbour*, *Empire Road*, *Walcott*). More recently, the reports of the 1981 Riots have focused attention on the relationship between the media and the black community.

The impressive programme of Black American Film seen recently in Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam highlighted many issues presently being con-

LATE NIGHTS AND MATINEES

NASHVILLE

(January 6, 8, 9)

Probably as much has been written about Robert Altman's *NASHVILLE* as any other film of the '70s. For many critics it remains the best American movie of the last decade—an epic vision of the state of the nation in the year of the Bicentennial and/or a stunning formal achievement. For some, however, it is representative of the most cynical and dishonest aspects of its director's work—"suspiciously indeterminate, grand in scope but fuzzy in effect", as Richard Combs wrote in a previous Arts Lab Programme. Such a divergence of opinion is not in the least surprising, and Altman himself would probably agree with scriptwriter Joan Tewkesbury's unhelpful comment that "whatever you think about the film is right, even if you think the film is wrong."

Most country music fans probably thought that the film was all wrong, not least because Altman and his collaborators chose to mostly ignore Nashville stars in favour of having the large and mainly Hollywood cast both write and perform their own songs. Likewise, the film constructs its own, partly real but mostly fictional Nashville, which it populates with twenty-four major characters whose stories are judiciously interlocked within a partly improvised format. The achievement in this respect—what Jonathan Rosenbaum has described as Altman "deftly juggling his cast of two dozen characters with the assurance of a master storyteller while simultaneously demanding (and rewarding) an unusual amount of alertness and participation from the spectator"—is undeniable.

Equally evident, however, are the contradictions and confusions which result from this attempt to combine a variety of approaches and perspectives. It is often difficult to know how to respond to the film, which mixes sarcastic humour with more direct scenes of powerful private emotions and often juxtaposes the two in a most audacious and disturbing manner. As Combs observed, "the published statements of the film-makers to the effect that it means whatever the spectator sees in it, that final definitions can't be attached to the people or their actions, suggests that they have shaped a fiction whose only function is to ape the surface profusion and meaningless of life without actually articulating that as a theme". Even the most open-minded country music fans are likely to have ambivalent feelings about the film, as Philip Strick indicated in his review of *NASHVILLE* for the *Monthly Film Bulletin*:

"For Nashville enthusiasts, part of the fun of it all will come from identifying the references (Barbara Jean's breakdown and Haven's ridiculous hairpiece, for example, have clear origins among Nashville's royalty), and picking out the great musicians of country music—among them Lloyd Green, Weldon Myrick, Johnny Gimble and Vassar Clements—working in such landmarks as the new Opry auditorium. Nevertheless, Altman's authenticity is questionable on at least two counts: the songs (many of them written by the cast themselves) are splendidly banal but seldom approach the astonishing awfulness of country music at its worst, while the costumes of the film's performers would make a poor showing beside the rhinestone confectionery of such as Hank Snow and Dolly Parton. In defence of country music, one might also remark that it is normally sung with vastly more skill than is demonstrated by Altman's cast, although their performances are surprisingly successful, while the fact that no genuine Nashville stars are either seen or referred to (despite walk-on appearances from Altman's Hollywood friends) gives the film a nagging undercurrent of inaccuracy. Characteristic of Altman's work, *NASHVILLE* swings unpredictably between a certain kind of overkill (the unexplained assassination, rammed home with the song 'It Don't Worry Me') and, at the other extreme, scenes of quite appealing delicacy, mostly derived from the beautiful performances of a whole range of unfamiliar faces . . ."

NASHVILLE. Dir.: Robert Altman, U.S.A., 1975. With: David Arkin, Barbara Baxley, Ned Beatty, Karen Black, Ronne Blakley, Timothy Brown. Colour/Scope. Stereo sound. Certificate AA. 161 minutes.



BAD TIMING

(January 13, 15, 16)

At the centre of Nicolas Roeg's striking film is the story of a failed love affair between two expatriate Americans whose paths first cross in Vienna. Dr. Alex Linden (Art Garfunkel) is a lecturer and research psychoanalyst at the University. Milena (Theresa Russell) is the youthful American wife of a Czech army officer (Denholm Elliott). They first meet at a party, where the deliberately provocative Milena taunts and propositions Alex. At first he resists her advances, but before long the two of them embark on a passionate affair which ends in tragedy.

Interestingly, Roeg gives more weight to the central male/female relationship in *BAD TIMING* than in any of his previous films; and, despite the non-chronological structure, repeated cross-cutting and numerous references to books, films and paintings, much essential information can be gleaned from the characters themselves. The dominant point of view in the film is that of Alex, a man supposedly possessed of scientific logic whose passion is aroused by the apparently mysterious Milena. It is his various attempts to understand this mystery from the blinkered perspective of his own high ideals, together with her various forms of resistance, which lead to a series of mutual misunderstandings and acts of degradation: at one point Milena dresses up as a grotesque parody of the kind of woman she believes Alex wants her to become, and on another occasion she asks him to rape her on the stairs of her apartment because she thinks he assumes that she is *always* sexually available; Alex's final act of possession/rejection is to rape Milena when she is unconscious from an overdose of drugs.

Roeg and his scriptwriter broaden this disillusioned view of human relationships (a view which, incidentally, develops more or less directly from the director's earlier films) through the other main characters, especially Milena's husband (Denholm Elliott) and the strange police inspector (Harvey Keitel). In a sense, they both act as mirror images of Alex. The husband is the opposite of Alex in that he accepts love's mysteries, a kind of loving which the film associates with a negation of passion. The case of the inspector is more complicated. He is both contrasted and associated with Alex until the pair are finally seen as twin role-players. He is connected with Alex, for example, through his profession (detection), and the film-makers develop this association into a consideration of voyeurism in its widest sense. "We are constantly in isolation, watching and spying on everything and everyone around", Alex explains to his students. "We are all spies".

At the end of the film, all the characters are indeed isolated, and all in their different ways have failed to comprehend the mystery of the "old story of love and jealousy and the inevitable end of an affair". *BAD TIMING* is the most invigorating re-telling of this old story since Bertolucci's *LAST TANGO IN PARIS*.

BAD TIMING. Dir.: Nicolas Roeg, G.B., 1980. With: Art Garfunkel, Theresa Russell, Harvey Keitel, Denholm Elliott. Colour/Scope. Cert. X. 123 mins.

COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER

(January 20, 22, 23)

One of the most pleasantly surprising Hollywood films of 1980, *COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER* presents a uniquely sympathetic yet unblinkered portrait of rural America and the roots of country music. In one sense, of course, its story of the life and career of Loretta Lynn is the very stuff that Hollywood biopics are made of. It charts the rags-to-riches progress of a poor "coal miner's daughter" through a disenchanting early marriage to success at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry and the hardships of ensuing stardom. But the crucial difference in the case of Loretta Lynn, the film suggests, is that the key to both her success and her ability to survive intact the self-destructive tendencies engendered by show business have to do with her never losing touch with her roots. This may not sound like such an awe-inspiring notion, especially when applied to the world of country and western music, whose combined powers of cynical manipulation and self-deception were mercilessly pilloried by Robert Altman in *NASHVILLE*. Yet *COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER* says it with simplicity and succeeds against the odds. Its first and best half is devoted to an admirably clear-sighted depiction of Lynn's early experiences as the favoured daughter of a poor family who eke out a living in Butcher Hollow, Kentucky. Here, at the age of 13, she is swiftly courted, married and crudely initiated into the facts of life by the rumbustious Doo (Tommy Lee Jones). Doo is fully aware of the limited options presented by Butcher Hollow (as his friend puts it, "If you're born in the mountains, you've got three choices: coal mine, moonshine or movin' on down the line"), and it is because of his determination to avoid a dreary life in the mines that the couple leave Kentucky. It is also Doo who discovers Loretta's singing abilities, and he keenly engineers her early professional career. As that career gains pace, however, the film begins to go badly off course as it charts the traumas attendant upon stardom. Somewhat surprisingly, since he was responsible for *STARDUST*, British director Michael Apted proves most successful at portraying Loretta's early life and her relationships with her father and Doo. For these scenes especially, Apted deploys the techniques of classic Hollywood film-making, which he enlivens with the freshness of approach that a foreign director can bring to bear on a quintessentially American subject. He also manages to steer the film back on course for magnificent finale in which Loretta (a beautiful performance by Sissy Spacek) rediscovers her real self and sings the title song. (Dir.: Michael Apted. U.S.A., 1980. With: Sissy Spacek, Tommy Lee Jones, Levon Helm. Colour. Cert. A. 124 mins.)



THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY

(February 3, 5-6)

Taking its cue from the metaphysical conundrums of *PERFORMANCE* and '70s TV cop capers, *THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY* jacks-knives the genre into the current climate. Bob Hoskins, a mobster mogul, has spent ten years turning London's underground into a rigidly patrolled hive of private enterprise. But his corrupt monetarism is hopelessly undermined with the arrival of the IRA and their ideology

('they don't know the rules'). There is the increasingly blurred distinction between police and criminals; the purely decorative function of the church; the popular swing away from America towards Europe as cultural/political allies; the Victorian morality that, for business purposes, can just about tolerate homosexuality; the racial bigotry; and the new class divisions. Hoskins and Helen Mirren give extraordinary performances'. —*Time Out*, April 1981. (Dir.: **John MacKenzie**. G.B., 1980. With: **Bob Hoskins, Helen Mirren, Dave King, Eddie Constantine**. Colour. Stereo sound. Cert. X. 105 mins).

EAST OF EDEN

(February 10, 12—13)

James Dean stars in another (c.f. *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*) film about an adolescent boy who feels himself to be unloved and crushed by the force of familial repression. Elia Kazan directed this adaption of John Steinbeck's famous novel, and said of the film: 'In that story, of course, what attracted me was nothing very mysterious: the story of a son trying to please his father who disapproved of him was one part of it. Another part of it was an opportunity to attack puritanism; the absolute puritanism of 'this is right and this is wrong'. I was trying to show that right and wrong get mixed up, and that there are values that have to be looked at more deeply than in that absolute approval-or-disapproval syndrome of my Left friends. Those two elements, I think, are in that film....

'It was autobiographical, that picture—more personal than anything I've ever done. There's some disguise, some transfers, but I knew every feeling in that picture. That's why it's very pure. You like it or you don't, but what's being said there is heartfelt'.—*Kazan on Kazan* by Michel Ciment. Secker and Warburg, Cinema One, 1973.

EAST OF EDEN. Dir.: **Elia Kazan**. U.S.A., 1955. With: **James Dean, Julie Harris, Raymond Massey, Burl Ives**. Colour/Scope. Cert. A. 115 mins.

Supporting film: **JAMES DEAN—THE FIRST AMERICAN TEENAGER**. Dir.: **Ray Connolly**. G.B., 1975. With **Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Carroll Baker, Dennis Hopper, Nicholas Ray**. Cert. AA. 80 mins.



THE STUNT MAN

(March 3, 5, 6)

Richard Rush's film stars Peter O'Toole in egomaniacal form as the film-director Eli Cross, ubiquitous on his swooping crane, who inveigles and blackmails Cameron (Steve Railsback)—on the lam from the police—into working as a stuntman on his epic First World War film. *THE STUNT MAN* is an extraordinary and exhilarating examination of power, paranoia and cinema-as-illusion, all done at high speed and with immense energy.

'THE STUNT MAN [...] has been a phenomenal success in America; and although this is doubtless attributable to the fact that it is undeniably fun to watch, there is no doubt that it is also partly due to the way in which Rush makes sure that no significant stone is left unturned and every message is firmly spelled out. The opening scenes are superb: a disturbing sequence of arbitrary connections in which the audience is left as disoriented as the hero who, on the run from the police, suddenly sees an ancient Duesenberg car rattling towards him over a plank bridge with evident intent to maim, and who in taking retaliatory action finds himself invading a movie screen to cause the death of a stuntman...'. —Tom Milne/*Monthly Film Bulletin*, December 1980.

(Director: **Richard Rush**. U.S.A., 1979. Leading Players: **Peter O'Toole, Barbara Hershey, Steve Railsback, Sharon Farrell**. Metrocolor. Certificate X. 130 minutes.)

EAGLE'S WING

(March 10, 12, 13)

This magnificent film was one of many distinguished Westerns made in the '70s, a decade which saw the genre revitalised by a whole range of film-makers, among them Clint Eastwood, Richard Lester, Monte Hellman, Arthur Penn—and Anthony Harvey. Harvey's *EAGLE'S WING* was perhaps the most surprising of the bunch, being a British film by a director whose previous credits (*DUTCHMAN*, *THE LION IN WINTER*, etc.) provided no indication that he would turn in one of the most unconventional and visually splendid Westerns ever made. Richard Combs described the film very well in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*:

'... The opening shot completes a circle—from light to dark to light again—across a wild, uninhabited terrain, both shot and landscape conjuring the 'birth of man' in '2001'. A Comanche chief, impressively costumed and mounted on a magnificent white stallion, then rides out of the mists with a load of furs and a two-man escort, only to be attacked by Kiowa raiders, who kill the escort, take the furs and mortally wound the chief, but fail to stop him being carried off on that magical steed. The sequence ends with a slow zoom into one of the Kiowas, White Bull, clearly obsessed by the horse—and the suggestion of this opening that the film is a kind of *huis clos* out West perhaps signals it as another saga, like *COMES A HORSEMAN*, of displaced urban man (certainly it is Harvey's most satisfying film since *DUTCHMAN*). Such hints are picked up, more circumspectly, but with increasing irony, in the sequence that follows, which is the nearest in the film to a conventional Western, and to conventional exposition and characterisation, introducing the two white trappers, the practised frontiersman Henry and his greenhorn partner Pike (Harvey Keitel and Martin Sheen, respectively)... Henry dies in an Indian ambush, knowing and doing exactly the right things in the circumstances, while Pike surprises their attackers by ignoring all the rules of self-preservation and driving them off with a one-man sabre charge. But if he is blessed by his ignorance, he is cursed by his dream—possession of the white stallion, which will make him the complete cavalryman, and which he takes from the burial ground of the Comanche chief, subsequently loses to White Bull, and pursues to the point of his own extinction until it disappears in a cloud of dust in the landscape traversed by the film's opening shot. Increasingly trusting to this 'alien' perspective, the film makes do with less exposition (and less dialogue) as it goes along... As the narrative is steadily simplified as a sardonic chase story, the complexity of the film's vision increases, particularly its sense of the cultural and moral presumptions involved in those individual obsessions, haphazardly chasing each other's tails... Harvey's images, appropriately, combine the archetypally Western, the broadly mythic and the essentially comic—his intention perhaps first crystallising visually in the splendid scene where Pike, startled awake by thundering hooves at night, sees a dark-caped horseman galloping by (a priest, riding for help for his kidnapped sister), and for a moment wonders if this apparition might be the resurrected Henry.'

EAGLE'S WING. Dir.: **Anthony Harvey**. G.B., 1978. With: **Martin Sheen, Sam Waterston, Harvey Keitel, Stéphane Audran**. Colour/Scope. Certificate A. 111 minutes.

DAYS OF HEAVEN

(March 17, 19, 20)

What has been most distinctive about Terrence Malick's two films so far is that their terrain is vividly described, even historically verified, yet not exactly locatable. *BADLANDS* takes place somewhere between a real-life pathology and the never-never land of juvenile adventure and teen romance. *DAYS OF HEAVEN* is even more disconcertingly situated: its immediate context is the burgeoning industrial society, in the moment before the paroxysm of the First World War. But beyond this, the film seems to be reaching back to the myths man has always told himself about the land and nature and his relationship to it through his work. The 'days of heaven' are not just the brief idyll of the three main characters who have escaped from the industrial horror of Chicago to the wheat fields of Texas, but some moment out of time, when the land still seems to belong to the forces that brought it into being before human



greed and destructiveness have quite taken a grip. One's sense that, for all the activity going on, the country is still strangely empty, unformed, is also the result of Malick's decision to 'pollute' his film with as little plot as possible.

The initial situation, in fact, is described in such blank outline that narrative options remain almost limitlessly open, and what immediately rushes in to fill the vacuum is a wealth of detail, descriptions, both visual and (through the narration of the hero's young sister) verbal intimations of expectancy and wonder. Bill (Richard Gere) has an argument with the foreman in a Chicago steel foundry, knocks the man down, then flees—it is unclear whether or not as a murderer—with his lover Abby (Brooke Adams) and sister Linda (Linda Manz) aboard a train carrying migrant workers to Texas and the wheat harvest. Nothing is directly said at this stage; the argument in the foundry cannot be heard above the din of the furnaces (a technique for blotting out the kind of information we expect from films that Malick employs throughout), and our only guide to motives and intentions is Linda's commentary, which is very much inclined to follow its own train of thought. Once the threesome arrive in Texas, Linda continues to serve for a time as our only access to the thoughts and feelings of her adult companions—and our continuing sense of the mysteriousness of events has something to do with the way they are displaced by this childish perspective.

Bill and Abby take work on a farm whose young owner (Sam Shepard) soon shows an interest in Abby. By accident, Bill one day overhears a doctor discussing with the farmer how he can expect to live no longer than a year; with the vague hope of moving in on the man's wealth, Bill persuades Abby to encourage the farmer. The two are eventually married; and Bill and Linda are invited to remain with them in the Victorian mansion that alone occupies the empty Texas plain. (Malick's 'vision', one feels, has something to do with such local perspectives; the lonely house is as vulnerable a symbol of man's sense of order and hold on the land as the giant billboard which Holly's father is painting in *BADLANDS*.) Events, however, do not follow the expected course. Far from dying, the farmer seems to find new life in his marriage, while Abby in turn begins to fall in love with him. The farmer increasingly suspects that Bill and Abby—who have always passed themselves off as brother and sister—are in fact lovers, and the stage is set for vengeance and destruction of a biblical order. In this conflagration, the 'days of heaven' will be consumed by the industrial Moloch glimpsed at the beginning (intimations of which, a tractor belching fire and smoke, have already disturbed the urban tranquillity) just as surely as the human passions consume themselves...

Richard Combs

DAYS OF HEAVEN. Dir.: **Terrence Malick**. U.S.A., 1978. With: **Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard, Linda Manz**. Colour. Cert. A. 94 mins.

Supporting film: **THE DUELLISTS**. Dir.: **Ridley Scott**. G.B., 1977. With: **Keith Carradine, Harvey Keitel, Albert Finney**. Colour. Cert. A. 94 mins.

BOOK

HOWARD HAWKS REVISITED

HOWARD HAWKS by Robin Wood.
B.F.I./3.95

Robin Wood's book *Howard Hawks* was first published in 1968, in the excellent Secker and Warburg 'Cinema One' series. It remained out of print for some years; now, however, the British Film Institute has published a revised edition of this study of Hawks's films, with an additional final chapter entitled 'Retrospect', in which Robin Wood describes and defines the changes in his theoretical approach which the events of the intervening thirteen years have brought about.

It is a puzzle to know how to consider a book of this sort. Times have changed and so have critical theories of film. Robin Wood himself indicates the problem: "Were I to write a book on Hawks today, it would differ not merely in occasional sentences and a few judgements, it would be written differently throughout" (p. 173), and: "I now see Hawks's films from a different perspective (in which Gay Liberation and Feminism have major roles); accordingly, the films change, reveal new aspects, new implications, new uses" (p. 174). These assertions beg the questions: of what, other than historical value, is this book (many of whose basic assumptions the author himself would appear now to repudiate), and what is the point of republishing it? Setting aside the fact that it is the most comprehensive single account of Hawks's work to date, the immediate answer must be that it is precisely because of its historical value that the re-issue of the book is so welcome.

Robin Wood wrote *Howard Hawks* in a climate of critical opinion very different from that which prevails today. In the 1960s, Hollywood cinema was only beginning to be thought worthy of attention by film theorists and critics; the 'politique des auteurs' developed by the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* writers, which focused on the work of American directors such as Hitchcock, Ray, Fuller, Ford—and Hawks—was largely responsible for the 'respectable' critical status such work began to acquire, and for the consequent establishment of a 'pantheon' of directors (see also Andrew Sarris's writings). While Howard Hawks had long been held in high esteem by French film critics, Robin Wood's book represented the most sustained and convincing argument for the inclusion of Hawks within that pantheon.

But there are serious problems in the book. These are, first, Robin Wood's contentious notions about 'art' and 'artists'; second, the wider theoretical problems of the auteur theory (which, it must be said, Wood himself notes in the 'Retrospect' chapter); and, third, the 'Retrospect' chapter itself. There is not space to deal with these at any length, but they are worth brief examination.

The first two areas of difficulty are in fact two aspects of one major problem. Robin Wood, in 'Retrospect', points to two of the dangers inherent in the auteur theory: one is that it restricts the reading and evaluation of films to the contribution of one individual—the director—and ignores the work of others (e.g. actors, scriptwriters, photographers etc.), and another is, as he says, 'its tendency to abstract individuals from their society' (p. 173). Another danger, and one which, significantly, Wood fails to observe, is that the auteur theory (particularly as it is applied here, moreover) is informed by and itself perpetuates an invidiously élitist notion of 'high art' as opposed to "the very lowest commercial products" (p. 7). While Wood rightly reclaims entertainment as a necessary part and function of all forms of art, examples abound throughout the book of the false distinctions and arbitrary value-judgements which this approach encourages: from the broad structure (the penultimate chapter is entitled 'Failures and Marginal Works' and includes among these THE BIG SLEEP and GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES!) to details such as "... a moment's reflection should have exposed the fallacies [of Robert Montgomery's use of subjective camera techniques in THE LADY IN THE LAKE], but it's one of those Bright Ideas that a *minor talent* tends to get hold of and refuse to let go" (p. 169, my italics), and "While Hammett is superior to

Chandler, Hawks is superior to Huston". There is an arrogance of tone here that is very hard to swallow. Equally, the placing of films in a hierarchy of artistic value that ranges from 'good' to 'bad' ignores those aspects of film which mark out its own specific place and value in the field of cultural studies. To relegate film *simply* to the realm of 'Art' is both to deny its potency in contemporary culture by abstracting it from its social and cultural origins and actually to preempt analysis of film in those terms.

These criticisms—of auteur theory in general and of Robin Wood's book in particular—are by no means new or original. There would be little point in repeating them here were it not that the new essay which comprises the final chapter in the revised edition seems to me to repeat the same old problems, albeit in a new vocabulary. Wood nods towards new theories of ideology and the recent interventions of sexual politics in film theory; nevertheless, it must be said that the basic assumptions about art and the pre-eminent authorial role of the director remain unchallenged. For example, in his discussion of 'Hawks's Women', Wood sets up Laura Mulvey's (mistaken) dismissal of Lauren Bacall in TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT as the paradigm of the feminist critique of Hawks's work, which is to caricature the feminist contribution to the subject (see, for comparison, the articles in *Wide Angle* on GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES and HIS GIRL FRIDAY).^{*} Wood is, I think, correct in arguing that one of the things which marks the treatment of women in Hawks's films as relatively radical is that "they are anomalous and threatening, but they are *there*" (p. 182). However, given the acknowledged influence of Richard Dyer on his work, Wood's failure even to glance towards the vital question of Hawks's use of strong female stars (e.g. Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, Lauren Bacall, Ann Sheridan, etc. etc.) is all the more regrettable. And although Wood briefly discusses 'Hollywood Ideology'—that set of more or less unspoken assumptions about society and culture which underlie and structure all Hollywood cinema—he does so *only* in relation to *Hawks*, to Hawks the auteur and not to Hawks as one member of a team of people working within a particular medium at a particular time in a particular society. In other words, Wood has grasped one end of the stick of conjunctural analysis and left the other end still trailing in the mud of traditional élitism.

This is a contradictory book. Its main thesis is one that the author himself now finds unacceptable: its postscript is, to me, equally unacceptable, for its changes nothing. Nonetheless, within the parameters which the main body of the book set itself in 1968, *Howard Hawks*, in its warm, and detailed evocation of its subject's films, and in its moments of profound insights into those films (see particularly the examination of RIO BRAVO), remains a pleasure to read. The British Film Institute has done well to republish it.

Marion Doyen

* 'HIS GIRL FRIDAY: Production for Use' by Marilyn Campbell. *Wide Angle*, Vol.1, No.2, Summer 1976.
'GENTLEMEN CONSUME BLONDES' by Maureen Turim. *Wide Angle*, Vol.1, No.1, 1979 (revised and expanded edition).

WDR AND THE ARBEITERFILM: FASSBINDER, ZIEWER AND OTHERS by Richard Collins and Vincent Porter. BFI, 1981/£3.75.
THE NEW GERMAN CINEMA by John Stanford. Oswald Wolff/£4.95.

Thousands of words are written every year about films, and yet so often the films being analysed seem to exist in a vacuum in which only one set of critical tools exist. Obvious instances of such a practice are auteurist studies structured entirely around the personal interests of the director and complex structuralist analyses of single texts.

It is the great strength of *WDR and the Arbeiterfilm* that the authors discuss the whole context from which this group of films on ordinary working class German life spring. They give extensive coverage to the importance of individuals working within WDR, the overall institutional situation, and the political context of which it is a part. In many ways it is a similar analysis to that applied by Julien Petley to Nazi

cinema in another BFI volume. All statements are well documented (including 45 pages of translated documentation). The authors express the hope that by foregrounding an aesthetic practice so different in form if not in aim from that of Jean-Luc Godard and many 'Independent' British filmmakers, and by detailing the institutional framework within which the films were made, they may help to re-set the agenda for a debate on radical practices and institutional pressures. To a large measure they have succeeded, and even if you have not seen the films, the book is well worth reading in this context.

John Stanford sets himself a much more limited task—an 'Introductory Survey of the New German Cinema'. In the first brief section he describes the background since 1945 and analyses the factors which have led to a renaissance of German film-making. The bulk of the book consists of chapters devoted to individual directors. For newcomers to the subject he describes the films, and his extracts from interviews are interesting and often illuminating. However, the book remains disappointing. The author admits to some of its shortcomings in his introduction:

'The virtues of the auteurist approach are debatable... Any selection of directors for special attention is bound to be... contentious... My choice has been guided more than anything by international reputation... Concentration on the big seven has meant that Berlin directors... have not been given the same attention they might have received had my perspective been a German one...'

Many questions need answering about German cinema. By structuring his work almost completely around individual directors, John Stanford has obscured the continuities, be they organisational or iconographic, and the connections between cinema and a society in which many leading film-makers have become identified with opposition to the 'the system'.

Allan Brookfield

ABOUT JOHN FORD by Lindsay Anderson. Plexus, 1981/£5.95.

The concept of *About John Ford* is an original and attractive one. In his early days as a critic, Anderson championed Ford's work. Distinctively for the time he was writing, he championed Ford as a popular entertainer, which meant that he saw Westerns like *MY DARLING CLEMENTINE* or *SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON* as being at the centre of Ford's achievement. He was opposing the then more orthodox valuing of Ford as a self-conscious artist on the basis of films like *THE INFORMER*. The first part of *About John Ford* is principally taken up with a long essay Anderson wrote in the mid 1950s (for a BFI series that was aborted for financial reasons) articulating and justifying his enthusiasm for Ford's films.

This essay is complemented by pieces specially written for the book, in which Anderson discusses both the films Ford made after his original essay was written and later critical accounts of Ford's work (the writings of critics like Andrew Sarris, Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington, Peter Wollen). The critical writings are supplemented by accounts of Anderson's personal encounters with Ford over the years, plus interviews and letters in which some of Ford's collaborators (Henry Fonda, Dudley Nichols, Nunnally Johnson among others) describe their work with and reactions to Ford.

Anderson doesn't feel that the later films (*THE SEARCHERS*, *THE WINGS OF EAGLES*, *SERGEANT RUTLEDGE*, *CHEYENNE AUTUMN*, *THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE*, *SEVEN WOMEN*, etc.) force him to change his basic account of Ford. He sees them as working within the critical perspective he established in his first essay but judges them as revealing a decline in Ford's work.

The book is given a critical tension by Anderson's response to later critical writing which has highly valued later films like *THE SEARCHERS*, *THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE* and *SEVEN WOMEN* and seen all of Ford's work from a perspective created from these films. This change has meant that Anderson's version of Ford as the champion of traditional values like patriotism, male comradeship, the family, and the mother, is opposed by a view of Ford as troubled by and

critical of these values. Anderson acknowledges that the later films do have troubled and critical elements but sees them as evidence of Ford's increasing inability to come to terms with the modern world, an inability that weakens the films rather than strengthens them.

This difference in critical estimates of Ford's films is accounted for by Anderson in terms of basic critical approaches. He sees himself as fighting a battle against auteurists and semiologists. This bundling together of auteurists with semiologists as the enemy is odd given that his own approach is fundamentally auteurist—he takes the film-director's personality as the key area for understanding how films work—and that many auteurists (Andrew Sarris, for example) have made criticisms of the semiological approach similar to his own.

Anderson is really fighting two battles. The first, from within auteurism, is against narrow applications of that critical method which focuses exclusively on the director's personality, ignoring the fact that making a film is a collective activity or that a director is affected by time and social change. This is a battle I think he wins easily. He is sensitive to the contributions Ford's collaborators made to the films and to the effects ageing and changes in U.S. society had on Ford's film-making work. He uses this awareness adroitly in his discussion of Ford's last films and, for me, provides a more convincing account of them than writers like Sarris or McBride and Wilmington.

The second battle, against semiology, is the more substantial one. Anderson is not fighting against semiology *per se*, but against any critical approach which has a strong theoretical emphasis. For him criticism is basically a matter of feeling and intuition. This is a battle I think Anderson fights much less convincingly. Most of the time he simply deploys conventional prejudices against theory, abstraction, academic, etc. His hostility to the academic is particularly irritating given that his own view of criticism is probably the dominant one in University Arts departments.

Anderson's failure to discuss semiology seriously is particularly sad. Currently too much semiological writing seems intent on giving theory a bad name. If the best ambitions that the introduction of semiology into film criticism represented are not to be defeated, a sustained discussion of its current theoretical assumptions and practice needs to take place. Otherwise two entrenched camps are likely to exchange insults to nobody's benefit, except perhaps that of the status quo.

A review of *About John Ford* would be incomplete if it didn't mention Anderson's account of his meetings with John Ford. He is perceptive about the conflicts in Ford's personality and the strategies Ford used to resolve those conflicts. He is sensitive to the difficulties created for a critic who admires a film-maker but who doesn't want to be cast simply into the role of a devotee. The result is writing that represents Anderson's position at its best; expressive and precise, in turn touching, wry, affectionate, funny. His account of Ford's relentlessly prosaic response to *EVERY DAY EXCEPT XMAS*, a film Anderson felt he had infused with a poetry he had learnt from Ford's films, is a masterpiece of painful comedy.

Alan Lovell

POPULAR TELEVISION AND FILM: edited by Tony Bennett, Susan Boyd-Bowman, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott. BFI Publishing/Open University Press. £6.25.

This Reader has been prepared to accompany a forthcoming Open University course on Popular Culture. An introductory note says that it is designed to 'evoke the critical understanding of students'. 'Evoke'? The peculiarity of language anticipates a confusion that is to permeate the whole production. The book is intended for two sorts of readership: the O.U. students doing the course; and media teachers and students generally who wish to have a representative selection of recent critical work in the field. If the needs of the former are satisfied, the requirements of the latter will probably be frustrated. As one element out of many in the course, the book might make sense. As a self-contained publication, it does not.

The book is divided into four sections, and

works from *Nationwide* to *JAWS*, from situation comedy to *Days of Hope*, are discussed from perspectives which concentrate less on the structures of broadcasting and film than, to quote the preface, 'on the structures of the texts which broadcasting institutions and the film industry circulate'. The topics include television fiction; current affairs and sport on TV; debates about the production of pleasure in the popular film; and television realism. The essays, from contributors who include Stuart Hall, Geoff Hurd, Colin McArthur and Richard Paterson, are generally excellent. The contextualising of the essays is generally inadequate.

For example, the preface, which, like the introductions to the other sections, is turgid and cliché-ridden ('signifying practice', 'seminal' etc.), talks of the expansion of film and television studies over the past decade. In the context of the Reader, this is misleading, since the book highlights television much more than film. The impression given, presumably inadvertent, is that whilst television studies have expanded, film studies have contracted. What this reflects is not an objective educational truth but a subjective shift of emphasis within the BFI. But nowhere is it explained why, in a book endorsed by the British Film Institute, television is given much more prominence. (Obviously one can think of reasons, but the emphasis is significant and should have been openly discussed.)

Film is given so little attention that it is initially mystifying why it has been included at all. The mystification increases when the film section is actually studied. Again this is the fault of the editors and not the contributors. One can see why Laura Mulvey's and Thomas Elsaesser's contributions to the debate about audience pleasure and narrative cinema have been included. But why include a truncated chunk from Richard Dyer's *Stars*, when the whole book can be bought at half the price of this dimly illustrated anthology and his stimulating and sophisticated argument can be followed complete? Why abbreviate Colin McCabe's 1974 *Screen* article on Realism, pay scant attention to his later reformulation of these ideas and omit his relevant observations on AMERICAN GRAFFITI? Stephen Heath's overrated piece on *JAWS* is available elsewhere.

The television material is interesting. Mick Eaton's rewarding piece on situation comedy suffers from a reluctance to come to terms with basic issues of the genre, like sources of humour and appeal, and from an unfortunate tendency to generalise from an untypical, wildly unpopular series, the ill-fated *Come Back, Mrs Noah* (you may well ask). The pieces on *Gangsters* and *Days of Hope* are well argued, but the issues and the programmes might appear somewhat dated when the O.U. course begins in 1982.

The sleeve talks of the collection's containing readings which 'collectively offer an integrated perspective on the formula structures and mechanisms which typify the more influential forms of popular film and television'. I would translate that as meaning that the collection is partisan to the point of parochialism. The emphasis is almost exclusively on British television. The critical approaches are quite similar, even if they sometimes lead to different conclusions. Various factors, like copyright or accessibility of material, might account for the absence of American or European contributions. But the claims of the Reader to be 'representative' are unconvincing. How can a section illustrating recent British film culture, criticism and theory claim to be representative when it omits the voices of, for example, Victor Perkins, Robin Wood, Charles Barr, Raymond Durnat, Tom Milne, Alan Lovell, Peter Wollen and Andrew Britton? For all the talk on the sleeve of 'pioneering' perspectives, the selection looks strikingly restricted, more so than in the Open University material produced by what this Reader would call the 'traditional' disciplines, like English Literature, Art History and Philosophy.

Indeed, the so-called range of approaches stretches, at a rough estimate, about three hundred yards—from the British Film Institute office in Charing Cross Road to the headquarters of SEFT down Old Compton Street. To paraphrase Leo G. Carroll's professor in Hitchcock's *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*: 'B.F.I., S.E.F.T.—they're all part of the same alphabet soup'. The students on the course must find some nourishment there, but if the Reader is anything to go by, they might also discover after a while that the diet tends to be a little monotonous.

Neil Sinyard

FROM THIS TO THIS



Arts Lab Press print and design

021 359 7682